

Number 115
June 1985
\$2.50

A MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIAN/GAY
LIBERATION

THE BODY Politic

● Jane Rule

On the perils of making rules to be broken

● Pics & Pecs

And breasts? Yes!

*Tom Waugh reviews a new book
on the history of physique
photography*

● Lives

Vita Sackville-West

Chester Kallman

& W H Auden

Truman Capote



● WHAT'S THE Big Idea?

David Vereschagin
on fame, glamour,
glory and the rise of
General Idea

● And introducing

Ellie Cominsky

**Highlights
from all over
of what's on in June**





photo: Nelson Carte

The Body Politic's highlights of what's happening in June

IN MONTREAL

● La Fête Nationale Gaie!

The gay event of the year in Montreal takes place on Sunday, June 23. Thousands of lesbians and gay men will gather at the CEGEP de Vieux-Montréal (255, est, rue Ontario, between St Laurent and St Denis) to celebrate gay pride à la Québécois(e)! Highlights include entertainment by **Le Théâtre de Verdure Presente**, a collection of street performers entertaining in various locations (5-7:30 pm); **Revivons Notre Patrimoine**, an amateur comedy revue with impressionists and monologues (7-8:30 pm); and a **Big Concert**, 9-10 pm in the main gymnasium, featuring a well-known performer (to be announced).

Various lesbian and gay organizations will operate kiosks to distribute information from 5 pm to midnight, and the festivities will climax with a **Super-Danse** featuring great music and running until 3 am.

Montreal really knows how to throw a party — this is definitely an event not to be missed!

● The International Jazz

Festival. June 28 to July 7. This festival should again prove a field day for jazz buffs. As in other years, most of the action centres on lower St Denis St, where there are several outdoor (free) performance spaces set up. As well, there are indoor sessions (eight daily!) at Spectrum (31, ouest, rue Ste Catherine) and at Theatre St Denis (1549, rue St Denis). Highlights include Chick Corea and the Wynton Marsalis Quintet. Tickets available at all Ticketron outlets, \$12.50 to \$17.50. For more details, phone the public information office at (514) 871-1881.

● **La Cage aux Folles** at Place des Arts. June 26 to 30. This touring production of the celebrated musical with lyrics by Harvey

Fierstein (Torch Song Trilogy) stars Peter Marshall (of Hollywood Squares fame) and Keene Curtis. Tickets: \$22.50 to 42.50. Place des Arts, 1501, rue Jeanne Mance; box office: (514) 842-2112.

● **Picasso: Rencontre à Montréal.** This long-awaited exhibition of 80 works from Jacqueline Picasso's collection opens June 21 at the Musée de Beaux Arts (1379, ouest, rue Sherbrooke). Most of the works have never been shown publicly before. You have to book your half-hour spot well in advance (through Ticketron, Teletron or directly at the museum). \$5; \$2.50 for students.

● **Tangente.** This experimental dance and performance art company presents **Danse-change: Montréal-Paris** June 5-9 and June

12-16 in their studio at 3655, boul St Laurent. Four new/avant garde French choreographers will present their works. Call (514) 842-3532 for more details.

● ADGQ Discussion Groups.

L'Association pour les droits des gais du Québec plans a series of discussions and activities for the month of June:

June 1: Discussion, Service-Jeunesse: "La Prostitution."

June 4: Discussion, L'Entre Nous: "Romantisme, si tu pouvais renaître...."

June 8: Service-Jeunesse: Soirée d'Improvisation.

June 15: Discussion, Service-Jeunesse: "La

pornographie et l'érotisme, la même chose?"

June 18: L'Entre Nous: "Mes réflexions sur l'ADGQ."

June 22: Service-Jeunesse: La Fiesta! Party de fin de calendrier (to celebrate the end of the year's activities — they break until September).

For more information: ADGQ, 263, est, rue Ste Catherine, (514) 843-8671.

Reported from Montreal by TBP correspondent Alan McGinty.

For the most up-to-date information on events in Montreal, pick up the latest issue of **Sortie**, North America's largest French-language gay publication. Call (514) 521-2732 for locations.



**Not a
damsel in
this dress
(and not a
dress!)
David Roche
brings love to
Frisco**

Thanks to John Aulec for the great line

IN

SAN FRANCISCO

The 9th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival takes place June 24 to 30, during the Bay City's annual Lesbian/Gay Freedom celebrations. Sponsored and produced by Frameline (a non-profit media organization), the festival seeks to develop an audience for gay and lesbian cinema, promoting wider distribution of films and videos both within and outside the gay community.

This year's film entries include Jeremy P's "David Roche Talks to You About Love." This short film is based on the hilarious 1981 performance piece by Roche (the well-known Toronto artist, seen above manipulating an ordinary white dress shirt in "Why I Am Not a Transvestite"), and combines his mordant style with satirical, often brilliant observations on romance and relationships. For more information about this year's schedule, contact Frameline at (415) 861-5245.

PGB •

IN VANCOUVER

● **The 4th Annual Vancouver International Film Festival.** Running through June 6 at the Vancouver East Cinema (7th Ave & Commercial Drive), the Hollywood (3123 West Broadway) and The Ridge Theatre (3131 Arbutus), the festival will feature a tribute to the Netherlands, and will include several gay films. Among them: **The Deputy** (at the Ridge, May 27, 9:30 pm), a Spanish film in which a political candidate's life is changed by a visit from a former gay sex partner; and **Drifting** (at the Hollywood, May 28, 9:30 pm), the debut film of a young gay Israeli director. For more information, call (604) 738-0400.

● **Joan Armatrading.** Continuing her tour, which encompasses the United States, Canada and Australia, the energetic singer brings her Vancouver fans a concert at The Orpheum Theatre, 865 Seymour, June 2 at 8 pm. For reservations, phone (604) 280-4444.

● **Frankie Goes to Hollywood.** Those carefully zany British boys come to the War Memorial Gym at the University of British Columbia Saturday, June 22 at 8 pm — but unless you know a scalper you won't be going to Frankie. The show is sold out.

● **Torch Song Trilogy.** Harvey Fierstein's Broadway hit comes to the Vancouver East End Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables, in a local production directed by Larry Lillo. Previews June 17 to 19, opening June 20, 8 pm. Matinees to be announced. (604) 254-9578.

● **Sex Tips for Modern Girls.** A musical comedy exploring the "modern relationship" continues in its fourth month at the Arts Club Theatre, 1585 Johnston St. The show's been getting good reviews, but the Arts Club is pretty middle-of-the-road, so don't expect the earth to move. Reservations and information: (604) 687-1644.

● **The Dance Theatre of Harlem.** The vibrant New York company bring their award-winning interpretation of **Firebird** to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, 649 Cambie, May 30, 31 and June 1 at 8 pm. Ticket information: (604) 280-4444.

● **The Alternate Pageant.** The second annual beauty pageant for female impersonators, presented by Perryscope. Last year's competition was a big success, so expect a lot of glitz. At the Orpheum Theatre, 865 Seymour, June 9 at 7:30 pm. Information: (604) 280-4411.

Reported from Vancouver by TBP correspondent Robert Harris.
For the latest information on what's happening in Vancouver, pick up the city's leading gay paper, Angles. For outlets, call (604) 684-6869.

JOAN ARMATRADING • VANCOUVER • JUN 2



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IN HALIFAX

● **William Tritt.** A familiar face in Halifax, the celebrated pianist will be back in town to take part in the two-week **Scotia Festival of Music**, May 26 to June 9 at the Dalhousie Arts Centre. Besides conducting master classes, Bill will perform in the opening concert May 28 with such luminaries as Maureen Forrester, in a June 4 concert of works by JS Bach to mark that composer's 300th birthday, and with the Colorado String Quartet on June 7. All performances begin at 8 pm in the Sir James Dunn Theatre. Call (902) 429-9467 for ticket information.

● **The Rise and Follies of Cape Breton.** The Great Caper Caper continues! The popular, rollicking variety revue returns to the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium with an all-new show, June 5 to 7. For information, call (902) 424-2298.

● **The Dance in Canada Conference.** The annual gathering is set this year for Halifax's Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, June 27 to 29. Call (902) 422-9749 for schedule information.

Reported from Halifax by TBP correspondent Robin Metcalfe. For the latest information on events in Halifax, call the Gayline at (902) 423-1389.

IN TORONTO

● **Coming Together: Lesbian and Gay Pride Day 1985.** True to this year's theme, a dedicated core of volunteers have come together to make Toronto's 1985 Pride Day celebration one of the best ever. In addition to having lots of food and drink available, the street events will include an array of great performers — rockers Bratty and Ona Radio, San Francisco comic Tom Ammiano, performer/director Sky Gilbert, the fabulous Clichettes and more. Community groups and gay businesses are planning numerous booths and information tables, and a colourful explosion of balloons will mark the beginning of the parade along Yonge Street.

So pray for good weather and come on out, Sunday, June 30 at Cawthra Square Park (at the 519 Church St Community Centre). Events begin at 1:00 pm.

Volunteers are still needed, too. If you'd like to pitch in, call Kyle at (416) 360-6037.

● **Smashing Borders, Opening Spaces: The 7th Annual Conference of the International Gay Association.** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day will serve as a grand introduction to Toronto for delegates from all over the world, here for the annual gathering of the IGA, the international coalition of gay groups, meeting in

Coming Together

COMING TOGETHER: LESBIAN/GAY PRIDE ● TORONTO ● JUN 30



IN EDMONTON: **The Times of Harvey Milk**, winner of the 1985 Academy Award for Best Documentary, will be featured during GALA '85 — Edmonton's Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week — set for June 20 to 25. The film, a look at the life of the San Francisco supervisor whose career as the city's first openly gay elected official was cut short by assassin Dan White in 1978, will be given its Edmonton premiere at The Princess Theatre as one of many events planned for the week. There will be a jazz night Friday, June 21 featuring Louise Rose and the Vocal Minority Chorus; an afternoon poetry and drama encounter Saturday, June 22 with a dance and barbecue organized by the Gay Alliance Toward Equality; a wine and cheese social at Womanspace; a swim night — and tons more! Get the latest information by calling GATE at (403) 424-8361 or the Lesbian Information Line at (403) 488-2918.

North America for only the second time. In addition to workshops on such universal gay themes as "Coming Out," "Lesbian and Gay Youth" and AIDS, there will be a host of cultural events that should have the city dizzy for months to come. Among those scheduled: **Wet and Hard**, a film and slide presentation on pornography and transgression by Tom Waugh and Sue Golding; the premiere of lesbian playwright Gay Bell's **Danger: Women's Joy, Women's Anger**; and numerous film and video screening by both local and international artists, including Nancy Reed, Tony Vinturi and John Greyson.

Concurrent with the IGA conference, gay and lesbian historians from three continents will present papers and slide shows as part of

Coming
Sex and the State: Their Laws, Our Lives, the second international gay history conference to be held in Toronto. The first, "Wilde '82," part of the 1982 "Doing It!" gathering, was a smashing success, and this year's looks like it will be even livelier.

Registration for the IGA conference is \$25 (\$15 for students and the unemployed), and includes admission to all events, as well as to all history conference presentations. Those interested in registering or in volunteering their services should write the IGA Conference Committee, 105 Carlton St, 4th fl, Toronto, ON M5B 1M2.

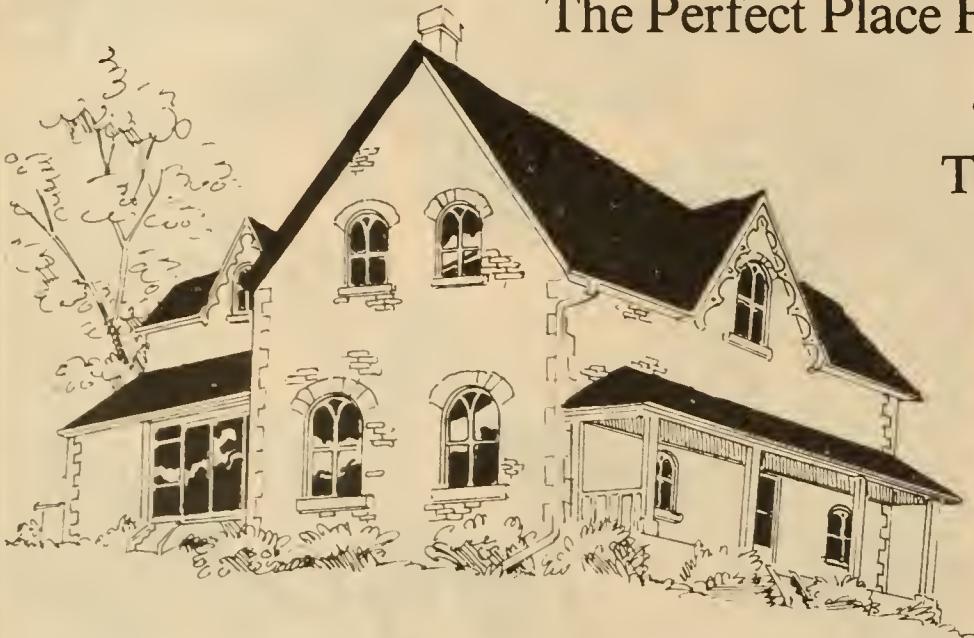
It's going to be an incredible week! Watch for more details in TBP's July issue.

● **Caught in the Act: A Safe Sex Cabaret.** In a completely different way to get its message about safe sex across, the

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Coming

For the latest information on what's going on in Toronto, call 923-GAYS (923-4297), or pick up a copy of **Xtra!**, published twice a month by the people at The Body Politic, and distributed free in bars, clubs, theatres and restaurants across the city.

AIDS Committee of Toronto has created a tossed salad of comedy skits, dramatic monologues, singing, juggling and multi-media magic. All planned for the Adelaide Court Theatre, 57 Adelaide St E, Monday, June 10, for a suggested price of \$10. Curtain is at 8:30 pm. For more info, call the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) at (416) 926-1626.

● **The Times of Harvey Milk.** On Thursday, June 6 at 9:30 pm, the Bloor Cinema (506 Bloor St W, (416) 532-6677) joins the esteemed group of movie houses that have shown this Academy-Award-winning documentary to help raise money for the gay community. The Towne Cinema in Ottawa presented the film for two nights in February with Gays of Ottawa, and a showing at Vancouver's Studio Cinema raised money for four local groups, including AIDS Vancouver. This screening, arranged in cooperation with Astral Films of Canada, will benefit the AIDS Committee of Toronto. Admission is \$4 — half of which goes directly to ACT. If you haven't seen this funny and moving film yet, this is a great time to do it.

● **The Second Lambda Art Show.** In response to last year's highly successful exhibition, the Toronto Lambda Business Council will be hosting its Art Show 2 on June 2, from noon to 7 pm at the Selby Hotel, 598 Sherbourne St. Everything from the sculptured clocks of Roger Wood to the painted photographs of Angie Cologoni will be exhibited for sale. Lambda hopes to raise money for the Gay Community Appeal, as well as to provide exposure for the artists involved. Admission is free, and refreshments will be available.

● **Moving On.** June 6, 7 and 8 at the Winchester Street Theatre, 80 Winchester — a premiere by the dynamic new choreographer Louise Azzarello, from Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise. Blending text and visual art with movement, Louise's innovative choreography evokes strong emotion through vivid images. In "Moving On," a collaboration with designer Janet Cornfield, she looks at some central themes in the lives of Canadian women. For more information, call (416) 533-8437.

● **The Northwind Folk Festival.** An outstanding line-up of talent will be featured in this second annual festival, which takes place on Olympic Island (of the Toronto Islands), June 21 to 23. Take the ferry to see



IN

Montreal: There's no one quite like Coco in English Canada. Otherwise known as Douglas Leapold, he could be described as, ahem, FLAMBOYANT! Coco is the king of the Montreal glamour and entertainment scene, with a finger in every pie in the province (and still keeping track of Europe, New York and Toronto to boot!). Of course, he knows EVERYONE.

He dishes out information on five TV shows, on CKMF, Montreal's most popular station, and in three magazines and two newspapers (one English, one French). He also hosts numerous fashion shows, performs radio and television commercials and acts as emcee at up to 12 straight discos a week!

Coco provides a good source or information for Montreal gays on CKMF, fulfilling the needs of all the gossip queens, and announcing which bars are having parties or community fundraisers.

His openness on the air recently got him into a lot of trouble with the Montreal police. It seems the boys in blue were playing with surveillance cameras again — this time at the Université de Québec à Montréal. Coco found out that people were being arrested for alleged "indecent acts" in one of the school's washrooms. Being very civic-minded, Coco mentioned on the air that people shouldn't fuck in public washrooms — particularly at UQAM — because of the risk of being arrested.

More than nine months after he offered this advice, he was formally charged by the police with "obstructing justice." Since some of the trials were already underway, Coco was accused of having publicly discussed a case which was before the courts. Never mind that the anti-gay dragnet still pulled in its victims, full speed ahead!

Coco can't understand why the Montreal police have continued with their legal action against him. "It's clearly a case of anti-gay harrasment to me," he says. He and his lawyer continue to wait patiently for the court's ruling.

Meanwhile, life goes on for Coco at its usual pace. Douglas manages his glamour empire from his fabulous loft in a remote corner of Vieux Montréal, but he's constantly jetting off somewhere. So, if you're in the Montreal vicinity and need to know who and what's hot this week, check out Coco at one of his media spots, and he'll fill you in!

Alan McGinty ●

Jane Siberry, KD Lang, David Sereda, Brent Titcomb, Lillian Allan, John Sebastian, Heather Bishop — and lots more! Tickets are \$15 per day, or \$32 for a weekend pass. For more information, call Northwind Arts at (416) 865-1397.

● **Buck Off Bratty!** The popular Toronto band Bratty will play the Cameron Hotel (408 Queen St W, (416) 364-0811) Thursday, June 6 — and offer a special treat. With admission, fans will receive a "Buck Off Bratty" card, entitling them to a dollar off future Bratty gigs during the summer. You can also catch Bratty downstairs at the El Mocambo, (464 Spadina Ave, (416) 961-2558) on June 13, 14 and 15.

● **The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion.**

The Pavillion is in ruins, but "famous, glamorous artists" General Idea have dug up some great artifacts for exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario (for a preview, see page 29 of this issue). 347 Dundas St W, until June 23. For more info: (416) 977-0414.

IN

WESTERN CANADA

● **Hosanna.** The Regina-based theatre company L'antitroupe will tour Western Canada this month with their production of Michel Tremblay's hit play about a Montreal transvestite, Hosanna (whose favourite routine is Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra), and his leatherman lover, Cuurette. The lead role is a challenging one, involving long and wonderful monologues, and when well done it's stunning. You can check out this production in Edmonton, June 6 to 8 ((403) 469-7193 for location and ticket information); Winnipeg, June 10 to 12 ((204) 233-8053); and Saskatoon June 14 ((306) 384-2126).

IN

CALGARY

● **The Gay Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association** will hold its annual conference in Calgary this month. Highlights include a social gathering on the evening of June 14, and brunch and a workshop on Sunday, June 16. Information on this event is available through the Canadian Library Association's head office in Ottawa, (613) 232-9625.

Got something coming? Get it into Coming! Send information and photos to: Coming, The Body Politic, Box 7289, Stn A, Toronto, ON MSW 1X9. Deadline for July events: Wednesday, June 5; for August events: Wednesday, July 10.

The new policy...

At first, 31 words, and then thousands more in memos, letters and talk. The centre of attention was a classified ad which asked for a black houseboy, and as the debate took form, it was clear that the larger gay community was divided in much the same way as the collective.

Some critics argued that the issue was straightforward and ought not to have required protracted debate at all. There certainly was no debate over the persistence of racism within the gay community and outside; and no disagreement about the hurt inflicted by that racism on gays and lesbians of colour. The importance of that issue was not in question. There was disagreement, though, over the "status" of desire and over the kind of regulation which the collective should exert over the printed word which we produce.

Last week we voted on the question (full consensus, our usual goal, remaining elusive on this issue), and settled on a classified ad policy which would not admit the "houseboy" ad again. The policy already in place allows for the rejection of ads, and makes specific reference to acts which contravene the Criminal Code. We have now added a further illustration of the kind of ads over which the collective would exercise its right to reject — ads which seem racially abusive or stereotypical (or which are abusive or discriminatory on other grounds), and which appear to be asking for a relationship of *real* subservience. Ads which are clearly directed to fantasy alone would not be turned away.

Taking this approach does not deny that there is a good deal of subtle and "polite" racism which will remain in the classifieds. What the policy aims for is the removal of the most blatant manifestations — those which most obviously seek the reproduction of racial inequality and stereotyping in the real world. (This is in addition to our continuing policy of refusing ads which exclude groups in an insulting manner, as for example in "no blacks," or "no fats or fems.")

The collective realizes that there will be ambiguity in some cases. If uncertainty persists after initial attempts to clarify wording, relevant segments of the gay community will be asked for their views. This was done in the case of the "houseboy" ad, although only after first printing (something which we will now try to avoid). It was also done in a way which angered the gays and lesbians of colour who were involved in the debate. The collective, they felt, was white, middle-class and, by all appearances, insensitive and unlistening.

It is true that the collective is white, and that will have to change if we are to fully reflect the community we want to work with and fight for. But the collective does listen. In this case, it listened, and by a majority vote changed its policy.

David Rayside, for the collective •

...and the new look

For the third time in *The Body Politic's* 14-year history, we've just put ourselves through a facelift.

The new look may seem a sudden development, but, in fact, it's the result of almost two years of planning how we might best meet the changing needs of the communities we serve. (Mind you, not all the grand plans have been realized — as is probably inevitable in a volunteer-based and often financially marginal operation — but we think we're moving in the right direction.)

The biggest change you'll notice is the replacement of the old "Out in the City" section, which gave detailed listings of upcoming events in Toronto, by "Coming," which highlights the month's happenings in other places as well. The key word there is "highlight." This magazine doesn't have the energy to gather or the space to print information on *all* the upcoming events of interest to lesbians and gay men across Canada, let alone beyond our borders — and there are excellent local gay publications to tell readers in Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa and many other places what's going on in their hometowns. (There's even one in Toronto — *Xtra* — which we publish, and which has taken over the role of

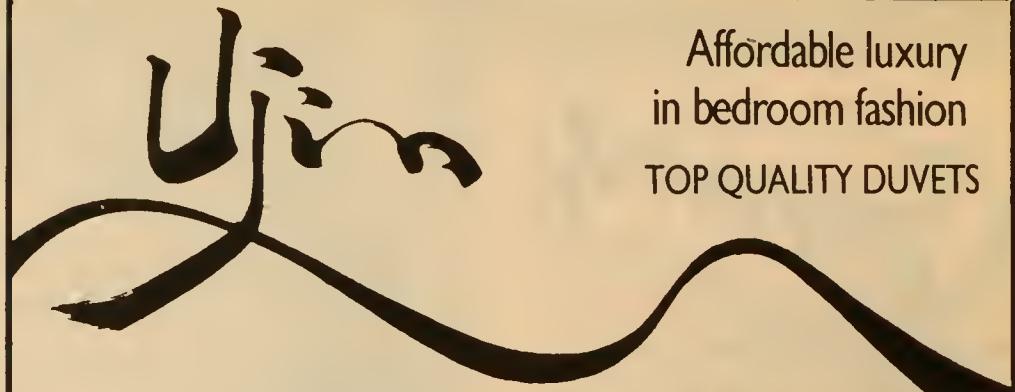
"Out in the City" in providing thoroughgoing listings here.) But "Coming" can serve to let people in one city know what's going on in another, and, we think, helps make it clear that we know the gay world doesn't stop north of Bloor Street (oops! Torontocentrism!).

Scattered through these pages, you'll also find letters from friends as far away as Australia and as nearby as Montreal and Halifax. We plan to make "Letters From" a regular feature, and we'll also be continuing "Document" (with apologies to *Harper's* magazine), in which we try to provide a fresh perspective on familiar things.

Finally, even our title is slightly different. The Body is back in a big way in *The Body Politic*, and the "magazine for gay liberation" is now "a magazine for lesbian/gay liberation." For a long time, the women and men who work on *TBP* resisted that change, not because the magazine isn't meant for both gay men and women, but because we believed — and still do — that "gay liberation" means the liberation of all gay people, men and women. But we also knew that lesbians can become invisible behind the general term gay — and now that half the paid staff and many of the volunteer workers who produce *The Body Politic* are women, we thought it was time to make our intentions a little clearer.

So read and enjoy.

Gillian Rodgerson and Rick Bébout
for the collective •



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Coming IN THIS ISSUE

Number 115
June 1985

29 Getting the General Idea

In 1968, three gay artists in Toronto decided to become a single "famous, glamorous artist." And they did. David Vereschagin looks back through the ersatz history of General Idea.

23 New muscle in Peru

Leading off our expanded World News section, a look at a country that's more than Macchu Picchu, llamas and tourist visions of the Andes.

27 The gay world?

How much of our lives can you show on a map? Alan O'Connor investigates *The State of the World Atlas* in the first of our series of "Documents."

34 Vita variations

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Slipping slips

Darling Amigos:

I read Dr Altman's review of Michael Bronski's book, *Culture Clash* (TBP, April), and thought I had fallen into a particularly nasty old *Twilight Zone* rerun. I won't take up your precious space with the Doc's obvious errors — like, eg, that the Doc missed that Bronski deliberately chose *not* to write about the current output of gayola since he was writing about the *history* of the making of gay sensibility.

I want to write about something a little more salient. I smell the stench of Sour Grapes in the Doc's review. And I'll tell you why. I've followed the work of most gay writers these past 15 years, and there is a certain divide which I will point out, since others don't see it or are too tasteful to make it public (I see it all too well and have a loud mouth and an eager word processor).

There are those gay writers, Doc Altman included, who are intelligent, hard-working, conscientious, etc. But, all this notwithstanding, *they are dull*. And are bright enough to know it. And resent their inability to overcome it: They would like to write books like Bronski's but can't do it. They lack the wit, the curiosity, the humour and the frankness. And that certain loucheness which is requisite. There are those, like Bronski, who can communicate their brilliant insights marbled with a popular light touch — the gift of any great writer — and then there are those who wish they had it in them to do it. Doc Altman's review bespeaks this condition in volumes. They shall be revealed by their slipping slips!

I've long since decided that the dull, since they are jockeying, with considerable success, into a permanent position of prominence, are to be tolerated with magnanimity and a sweet smile. These hard-working little squirrels, busy career-making, will continue with their melba-toast efforts. But, alas, they will never get the jokes. And they will bitterly resent, as Doc Altman does, those, looser than they, who committed to their own important work, enjoy the wonderfulness and the fun they make for themselves out of it all.

Mitzi
Boston

I haven't read Michael Bronski's *Culture Clash: The Making of a Gay Sensibility*, but the "deeply reactionary snobbery" Dennis Altman finds in the book is such a constant in so much of the visible, organized (and published) lesbian and gay community that Altman's criticism is quite believable. The fact that such criticism and any serious discussion of class are so rare in that community makes Altman's comments remarkable.

To cite a relevant example, it's a tribute to cooptation that even an avowedly radical publication like *Gay Community News*, the paper Bronski writes for and the paper I used to work for, can proclaim itself so committed to opposing racism in the gay community, to supporting gay prisoners and to sympathizing with the Nicaraguan revolution and yet be practically oblivious to the issue of class, as though there were any other basis than class for understanding racism, prisons and revolution. If there are exceptions at *GCN*, they prove the rule by standing out clearly

as exceptions and by meeting indifference and an opposition that ranges from passive to arrogant.

Meanwhile, someone should point out that in the very same issue of *The Body Politic* with Altman's review and with a long and painful debate about a racist classified ad, another ad titled "Quality and Style" read: "He doesn't believe in old adages like 'the best things in life are free' because Cartier and Fenton's cost... Torn blue jeans? — Forget it... Unemployed? — Don't bother reading further...."

The debate on the racist ad is timely and extremely important and I appreciate your publishing it. But I would have appreciated it more if the "Quality and Style" ad had generated a little controversy too.

David Morris
Austin, Texas

The classified debate

I would like to take issue with the following statement by Tim McCaskell which appeared in the April TBP discussion on racism:

"How is material to be determined to be insulting or offensive...? Since our pool of collective members and volunteers does not contain the expertise for a final judgment, I think it is important to go outside the collective and consult with the representatives of the groups concerned. It also seems to me that the advice of such groups needs to be followed if we expect to maintain relations of mutual respect."

How far does this principle go? The debate on separate-school funding in Ontario is starting to bring the Orangemen and other RC-haters out of the woodwork, and it would probably not be hard to find a small group of liberal Catholics, the same size as Zami or Gay Asians Toronto, who would claim that attacks on separate-school funding are offensive to Catholics. As an opponent of extending the sectarian school system in Ontario, I could not accept this as a reason for remaining silent. Exploration of issues can't be brought to a halt because some people say they are offended.

To advocate free expression concerning sexuality or other matters in the pages of TBP is not to advocate "libertarianism." It's simply to advocate democracy. Free expression is not a luxury for the more powerful or the relatively well-to-do. No social movement or community that wants to get anywhere can do without it. Of the various ways of determining the best course of action, open debate is the only one likely to produce a happy result. No group can claim to already know the best way, and so to have the "expertise" to draw the line concerning what may and what may not legitimately be expressed. This is especially true when the issue is arguably the central issue of the movement in question, as sexuality is for the gay movement. But even if it is not — even if sexuality is only "an important part" of "community development," as Tim says — the question remains whether debate on sexuality is to be open or to be limited by the supposed right of certain groups not to be offended.

I don't think TBP could even claim to have the "expertise" to decide what is offensive to gays, never mind other oppressed groups. Heterosexuals who see themselves as supporters of gay rights need not limit what they say about us to a list of things that TBP or any other gay group deems acceptable. They should certainly listen to us; they should certainly expect vigorous disagreement; but then they should speak their minds, without fearing loss of respect. They may hurt and offend me, but I'd rather they got it all out. I can't chal-

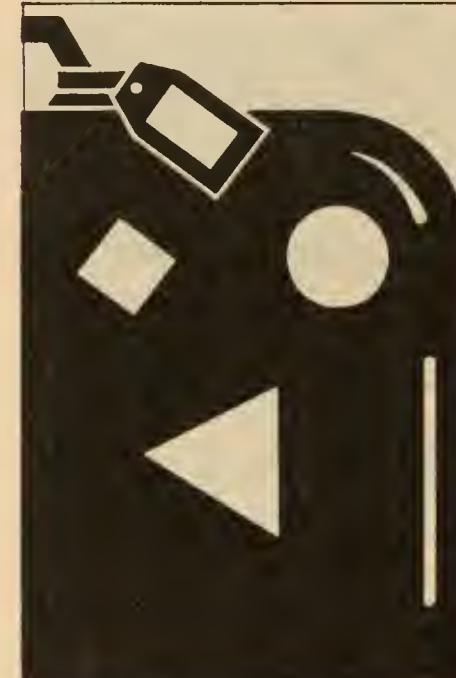
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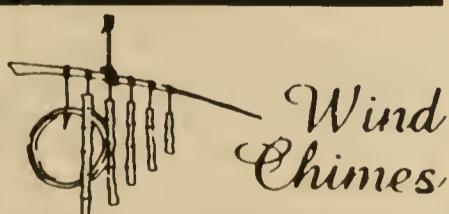
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lenge what they never say, and they just might say something worthwhile.

Supportive heterosexuals will continue to have my respect as long as they oppose anti-gay acts: police raids, firings, reductions of AIDS funding. Gay blacks and Asians should in my view continue to support *TBP* as long as it opposes racially motivated bashings, racist admission policies at bars and the like.

Let readers ask themselves this question: do you believe that merely because you are gay you have some special intuitive ability or some "expertise" to make a "final judgment" on whether it is homophobic to refer to a gay man as a female, to say that gays choose to be homosexual, to portray gays as characteristically promiscuous? I was once quite certain that saying gays choose homosexuality was anti-gay — nothing but a fundamentalist Christian argument designed to deny the need for gay rights legislation. Now I believe there may well be an element of choice involved.

Asking questions like the ones above is not like asking whether queerbashing is homophobic. There are no easy answers, and it is better to simply explore them, no matter how uncomfortable that may make us. The same goes for the houseboy ad.

Brian Mossop
Toronto

Ken Popert's defence of racism in sexual fantasies holds as much water for me as a Klansman's defence of a lynching as being okay because he's always been taught to believe that Black people are less than human.

Emotional responses are no less learned and conditioned and no less subject to change than rational opinions, based on what we learn about human values. But I won't try to repeat Richard Fung's excellent exposition of the issues involved.

The failure to deal with racism has been for me the principal weakness of *The Body Politic* for the ten years I've subscribed, but as it is a weakness throughout the gay liberation movement and *TBP* has nevertheless been the best source of news, I continue to read. But as a working-class gay man who is out on the line (a production line at a factory, that is) and deeply involved in fighting to rebuild my union in the face of Reaganomics, racism and class-collaborationist union officials, the fact is that the intellectual defence of racism that Popert and others make is not only repulsive, but the clearest practical demonstration of why the gay movement remains on the sidelines of progressive politics, and is unable to make allies among either other oppressed groups in our society or even the majority of working-class gay men.

Toleration of such bigotry in the *TBP* collective deprives you of all legitimacy as leaders for gays and lesbians, of whatever class or colour.

Jerry Silberman
Philadelphia

"If there were no soldiers, there would be no armies," someone said or wrote a long time ago. It is indeed the combined dreams and fantasies of hate and violence of individuals which create armies that eventually must engage in wars.

Similarly, the roots of all our actions lie in our private dreams, our secret desires. If my desires begin to surface when I interact with others, it is my responsibility to discuss the situation with those involved in order to find out their reactions

**"Congratulations!
At last we know how
large a horde of
politically correct
dilettante gay
pseudo-intellectuals
can dance on the
head of a pin!"**

and to compare them with the reactions of others, mine included.

Arguments based on the "inviolability" of desire beg the issue of racism and could easily be seen as evidence of immaturity. We cannot study desire, or the nature of desire, by acting out all our fantasies, sexual or otherwise. Those who try to do so may only discover, perhaps too late, that their dream has turned into a nightmare.

As a white person, I am concerned with the liberation of all human beings. I am old enough to have realized that many of us white males have a definite fascination with the experience of dominating or of being dominated. However, as a member of a dominated minority, I have learned to avoid and resist all forms of domination. In my view, the ultimate goal of domination is manifested in the annihilation of the individual.

The central point in Ken Popert's memos is that "desire is not there to be evaluated and either glorified or condemned." As an individual, I have the right to do these three things, and I will defend the right of other individuals to do the same. We must always remember that the first step in the creation of a totalitarian state is made when its intellectuals convince themselves that ethical considerations are of no value to human beings.

In closing, I must say thanks to *TBP* for its frank and open discussion of such a delicate matter. Love.

André Bérubé
Ottawa

Congratulations! At last we know how large a horde of politically-correct dilettante gay pseudo-intellectuals can dance on the head of a pin!

Look you silly tarts, if I want to keep a small-cocked, ugly, fat, deformed, elderly, black, Jewish, handicapped, ill-tempered, retarded, red-headed, communist, criminal, big-eared, one-eyed, gay dwarf as a sexual pet, you and all the organizations against endowmentism, lookism, ageism, physiqueism, racism, religionism, and who-knows-what-else-ism might be justified in finding that offensive. But if there is another gay individual out there with any or all of those characteristics who wants to live out the other side of my gay fantasy, do you really think it is your self-righteous place to pass judgment, let alone interfere? My relationship preferences do not need The Collective's Stamp of Approval. (I've got a certificate from the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, thank you.) If all you guys can be pro-choice for fetus-snuffing, why not pro-choice for a little adult-to-adult inter-racial sexual servitude?

Seriously, all the types characterized above are

THE BODY Politic

"The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves."
● Kurt Hiller, 1921

LETTERS

discriminated against in our society, often just as systematically and cruelly as blacks, Asians or women are. But these groups aren't organized and don't react to the many examples of prejudiced discriminatory selection criteria that exist in virtually every one of your companion classifieds.

TBP is a gay liberation paper. The argument that it therefore has to be a *pure* non-sexist, non-racist, non-anything-else-ist is garbage. To attempt to incorporate every liberationist policy and philosophy into a gay paper is just plain silly. We may overlap with feminist and anti-racist ideals, but the objectives of the various liberation groups are not always compatible let alone congruent.

If *TBP* encompasses *all* liberation, then remove "gay" from the front cover banner. But if it is to be a gay liberation magazine, as it states, then let gays communicate through *TBP*, despite our diverse political, intellectual and preferential warts. Sure, discuss any issue (including racism) you want to, and take any editorial position you want in these discussions, but kindly don't inhibit the freedom of gays to communicate through *our* magazine by passing *your* judgment and putting *your* universally politically "correct" views on egalitarian-relationship-ism in our way. *That kind of oppression is worse than anything suggested by the ad in question!*

Bill Roberts
Kitchener

The controversy over the "black houseboy" ad in *The Body Politic* seems to have missed an important point. Blacks, Asians, and other persons of colour have traditionally been employed in low-paying positions subservient to whites because those in control of the economic system tricked them, coerced them, or otherwise left them little choice. More recently, the huge disparities in income between developed and underdeveloped nations have induced many non-white peoples to accept working conditions in their countries which we would never accept in ours.

Now comes along someone who is asking for a young, muscular black to be his servant. What's the schtick? Who knows or cares? As far as I'm concerned, it's an exchange of favours between consenting adults. Especially since the type of person he's requested — a student or young businessman — would in all likelihood be the type of person in a position to refuse.

With all the misery and unfairness in the world it's a real shame to waste so much energy on a non-issue. The real exploiters are going to carry on their business at the point of sale in Africa or Asia, not in the classified ads of *The Body Politic*.

David Scott
Montreal

As was confirmed in his subsequent letter, the man who placed the ad in question was seeking a real houseboy, *i.e.* someone to do light housework.* The ad therefore contravenes the Ontario Human Rights Code by specifying race. The fact that this kind of discrimination is recognized as unacceptable by the state, but not by so-called progressive gay liberationists, should indicate why so many non-white lesbians and gays have been so frustrated by this debate. *TBP* is making us go through basic arguments that we went

through with the mainstream community decades ago. For someone like me who works in the area of race relations this is very depressing.

Even though racism is now acknowledged as socially uncool, it is still largely misunderstood by people who do not experience it. In the area of gender and sexual orientation, the terms used spell out a difference in the kinds of discrimination practiced. It is clear for example that men who are "sexist" are not necessarily "misogynist." To discriminate against women one doesn't have to consciously hate them. Similarly one doesn't have to be "homophobic" to be "heterosexist." At a recent meeting of a mens' group I went to, no one would have been caught dead using words like queer or lezzie but still their presentations tended to assume that all men are straight. Unfortunately words for racism in English haven't developed this distinction and people assume that racism necessarily refers to "incidents" like beating or name-calling, and that for a person to act in a racist manner they must hate blacks or Asians or native people.

In my experience there aren't many Ernst Zundels in this world, but that doesn't mean that discrimination is the prerogative of only a tiny minority. In my experience also, the discrimination that people of colour face in the gay community comes not only from people who won't sleep with us but often from people who do. Some of the most sexist men in the world are married. Racism is not just a matter of individual prejudice. It is fundamentally a question of social practice.

Finally I really don't think it is fair of *TBP* to alter history. The memo that appears from Gerald Hannon is not the same one that was distributed on February 7. In the original Hannon speaks of smelly, big-dicked black studs and exquisite, quiet Asians with no indication that he does not believe these stereotypes. All we got was that he shouldn't be made to feel guilty for holding them. I have known Gerald for many years and he is not an Ernst Zundel. However I think it is contradictory for the paper to say it wants to integrate itself, and then when talking with the few lesbians and gays of colour who are organizing, to make racist remarks and not bother clarifying them until well after the fact, and on the contrary to make them as provocative as possible.

Richard Fung
Toronto

* Gerald Hannon replies:

Richard Fung refers to a letter received from the advertiser, not confirmed for publication, in which he says he was seeking someone to help around the house in exchange for a rent-free place to live, and who would "hopefully find me attractive enough to form some emotional bond between us."

Richard is right about my memo being edited for publication — all the ones in the April issue were. The much longer original versions had been produced for discussion among people at *TBP* who, it was assumed, were unlikely to misunderstand each other's motivations, however provocative the arguments. People like Richard who know me personally would, I hope, agree that I am "not an Ernst Zundel" (recently convicted in Ontario of spreading anti-Jewish hate literature); for people who don't, I felt I had an obligation to clarify my statements.

My memo was not "distributed on February 7." It was, along with others, made available at the February 5 collective meeting with members of Zami and Gay Asians, with whom I had a

inviting!



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chance to try to clarify in person what I meant. If I failed, my failure would simply have been compounded if my "provocative" words had appeared in print without a clear statement of how I intended them to be read.

Re-located youth

With respect to your article regarding the Edmonton lesbian/gay youth group (*TBP*, April), I am glad to let you know that the group has been offered space and resources through Westwood Unitarian Church, of which I am a member.

I appreciate the acknowledgement of *The Body Politic* of the assistance we have given the group and its leadership — this support is the reason I have been surprised by the approach taken by the group's leadership when we indicated our need to regain the space for use by our youth employment programme, and offered assistance to the gay/lesbian youth group for re-location.

On a second point of your article, with respect to the employee who didn't know that the space is

being used by the youth employment programme, I am not surprised, since we have approximately 70 staff in eight locations in Alberta. Not even the five Edmonton locations know the details of the use of space in other facilities. Due to the installation of equipment in the building, we will not be offering space to small non-profit groups as we have done in the past, but once we have a new facility in place (now planned), we hope to be able to once again make this offer.

*Carol J Ladan, Executive Director,
McMan Youth Services Association
Edmonton*

Kitchener clarifications

I am writing to express my concern about an article in your February issue, "Waterloo man shot in cruising park," by Joe Szalai. There are several incorrect statements in this article and some disturbing innuendo.

First, the headline should read, "Kitchener man shot in Kitchener cruising park." Second,

Mr Szalai suggested that this was another in a series of attacks against gay citizens. If this is true, what other attacks have there been? I have lived in Kitchener all my life, and to my knowledge there is not a serious anti-gay problem. What problems there have been, the gays brought upon themselves, *i.e.*, sex in public places, etc, etc.

Third, and perhaps most disturbing, was Mr Szalai's statement that to date there had been no contact between the Kitchener-Waterloo police and the gay community about the murder. This is false! From the beginning, myself and fellow gays worked closely with the police, supplying information and helping follow up leads. The day the police announced they had arrested a suspect, I received a call from the detective in charge of the case, thanking me and other members of the gay community for our assistance. He said that when he was given the case he was told to expect no co-operation from the gay community. He further stated that because of our assistance and information, many leads were quickly followed up and hours of investigation were saved.

I cannot understand why Mr Szalai would make such a false statement, and I can only think that it could potentially harm the good rapport between the Kitchener-Waterloo police and the gay community. I also think it is the responsibility of *TBP* to ensure that the basic facts about a story are correct.

*Tom Riedel,
President, Half-and-Half Club
Kitchener*

Joe Szalai responds:

Tom Riedel has only one valid complaint about the article I wrote in the February issue. Yes, the headline was in fact wrong. That however was an editorial mistake (see correction in *TBP*, March) and not mine.

Tom's second point that there isn't a serious anti-gay problem in Kitchener is debatable. The fact that he is unaware of past attacks on gay men simply indicates that gay men haven't told him about the attacks. They have told me.

Tom's assertion that "what problems there have been, the gays brought upon themselves, *i.e.*, sex in a public place, etc, etc" is, in my opinion, a total misreading of the situation. To my knowledge gay men have not been attacked for *having sex* in a "public place." They have been attacked for *being in* a public place. I know of straight men who have been threatened and harassed for being in Victoria Park after dark. Did *they* bring the problems on themselves? Do the parks and the streets belong only to thugs and hooligans after dark?

I am not disputing the fact that men have sex in the park and in the washrooms. But it has been my observation that every attempt is made to make it a private affair. That's why the park is busiest at night and that's why the doors to the washroom cubicles are closed.

I know that an argument could be made that a few men have sex in the park because they are exhibitionists. Others go to the park because they are voyeurs. All in all it seems to be a rather harmless symbiotic relationship.

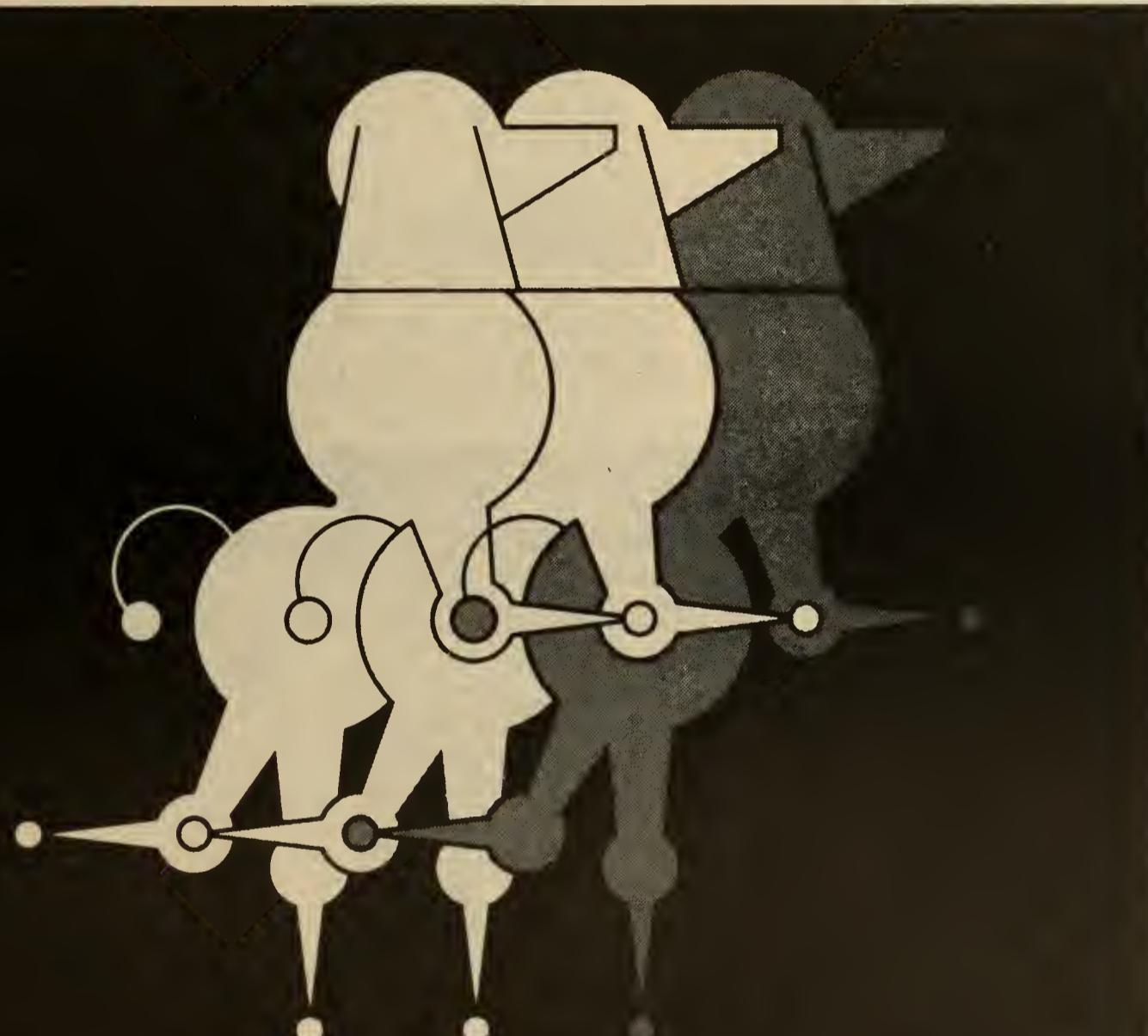
Tom also takes exception to my statement that the police had not contacted the gay community during the investigation of the murder. He has a point but it is misplaced. I know that the police talked to gay men during the investigation but not because they were members or representatives of the gay community. They talked to them because the police were looking for people who might have known something about the murder. The police were investigating a murder and not the gay community and that is why the police did not contact the community.

Finally I would like to say that I wrote the story based on the facts that were available to me at that time. It is unfortunate if Tom thinks that I might have some kind of ulterior motives.

Our omission

In our May issue, we failed to credit the photographs of Ian Paterson which appeared on the cover and on pages 16, 30 and 31. The pictures were taken by R Hurlbut. Our apologies.

The Body Politic welcomes your letters. Send them to us at: Letters, TBP, Box 7289, Stn A, Toronto ON M5W 1X9. Letters selected for publication may be edited for length.



"We wanted to be famous; we wanted to be glamorous; we wanted to be rich. That is to say, we wanted to be artists...."

We knew that if we were famous, if we

were glamorous we could say, we are artists, and we would be. We did and we are. We are famous glamorous artists."

General Idea from FILE Magazine, 1975

**THE 1984 MISS GENERAL IDEA
PAVILLION APRIL 26-JUNE 23
1985 ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO**

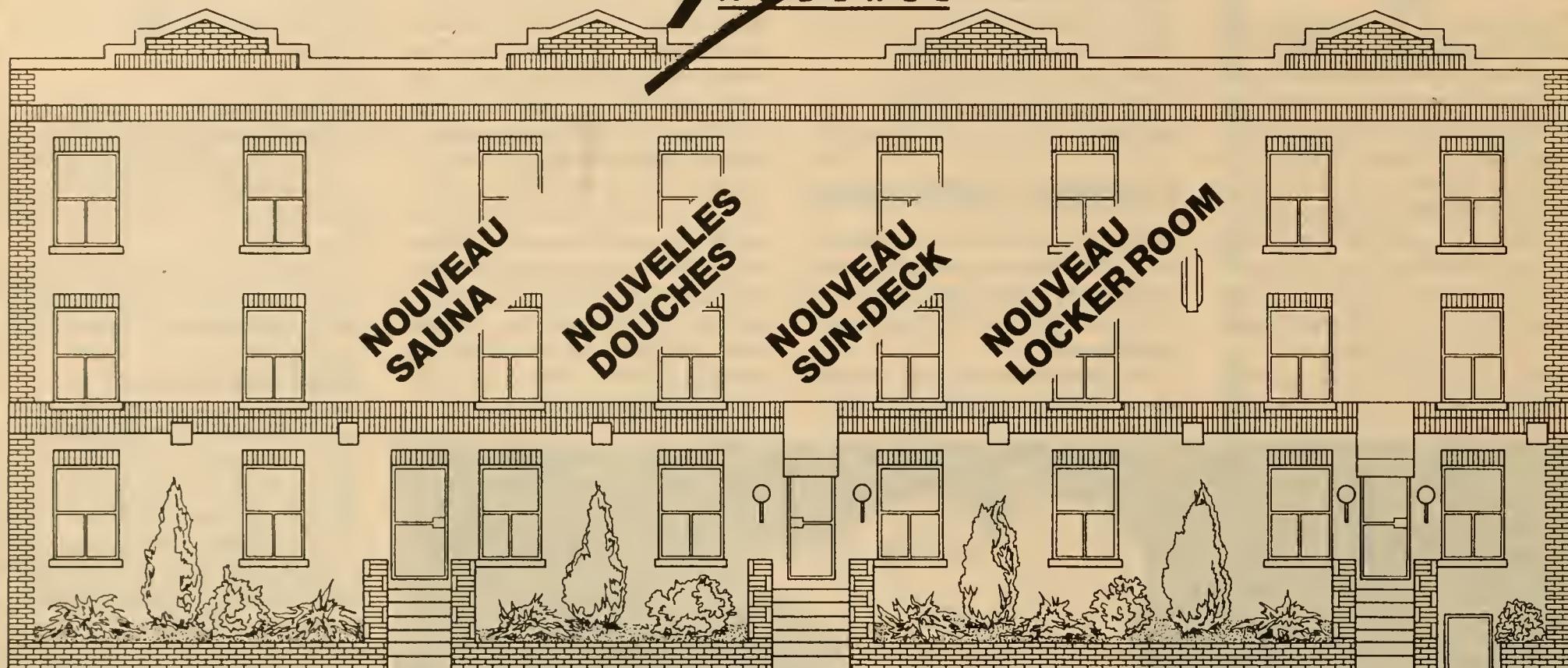
CANADA'S FINEST ALL MALE HOTEL

*and
Braggs*

AIR CLIMATISÉ PRIVATE BATHS

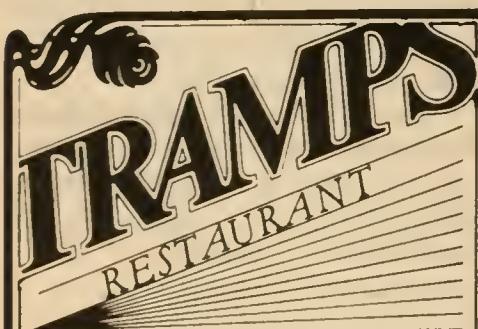
DOUCHES COMMUNAUTAIRES

AUBERGE



S A U N A

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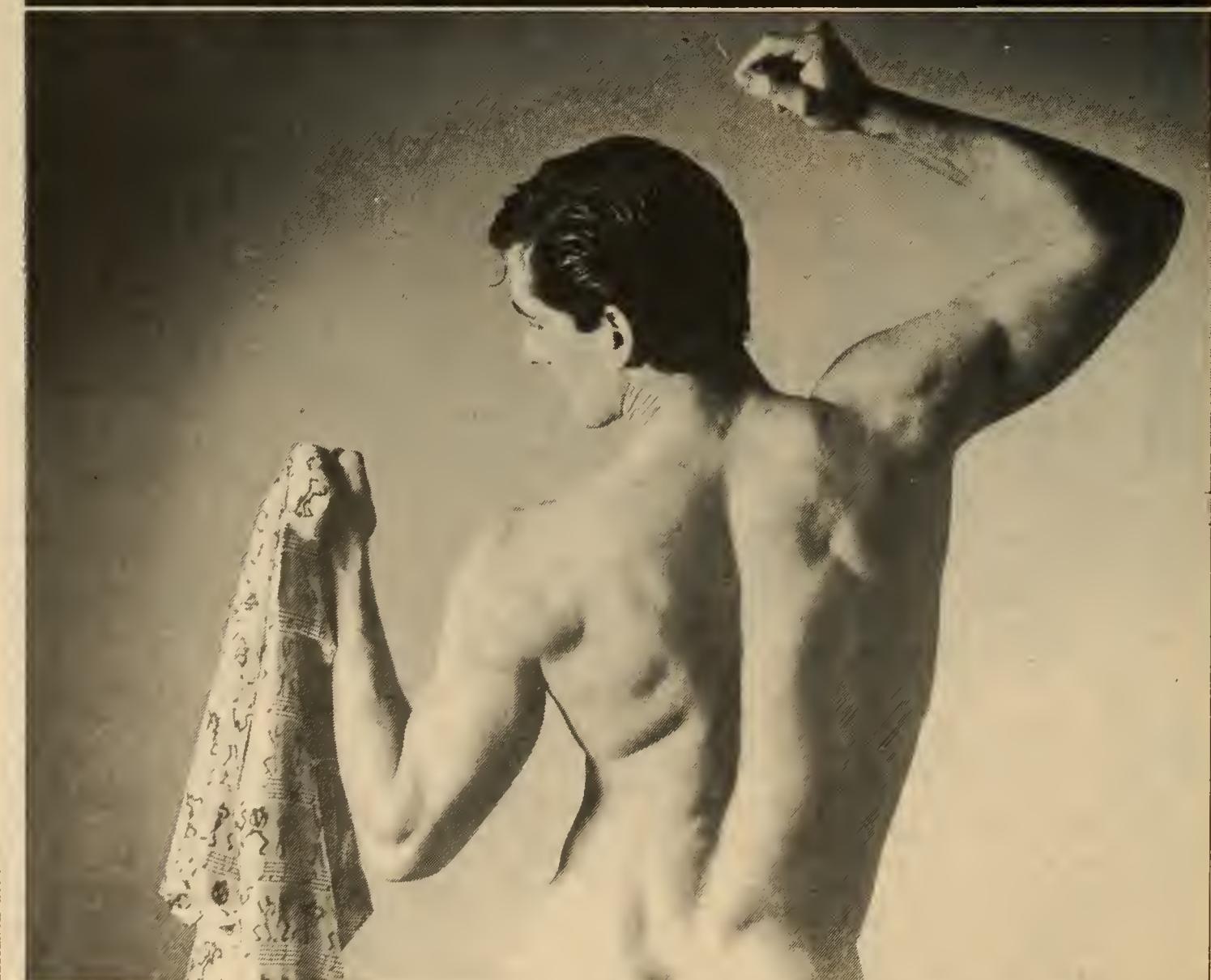
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*After a soporific campaign,
Ontario voters slash the Tories to a shaky minority.
Now the real fun at Queen's Park begins*

Last call for Miller?

"Any board of education which has a gay liaison is not my kind of school board."

— Ontario premier Frank Miller on January 25, the day before he won the leadership of his party and the premiership.

Apparently, any government with Frank Miller as premier is not Ontario's kind of government.

This seems to be the verdict delivered in the May 2 election, which saw the ruling Conservatives reduced to 52 seats in Ontario's 125 seat legislature; finishing just four seats behind the Tories were the Liberals, with a surprising final count of 48. The New Democrats maintained their ground with 25 seats.

It was an achievement that the Tories managed to muzzle their leader as well as they did, preventing him from injecting a potentially unique excitement into a dull campaign. Miller, known for his plaid jackets, often as embarrassing as his spontaneous political statements, took the fatal route of lulling voters to sleep by creating the illusion that all is well in Ontario. Issues, an important ingredient in any campaign, simply did not exist.

"Do you want to stop illegal abortion clinics NOW? THEN DEFEAT BOB RAE AND THE NDP!"

— last minute literature found in Toronto's subways, complete with picture of aborted fetus, courtesy of Campaign Life.

Gay rights, a high-profile issue in the 1981 campaign, surfaced only in two heavily gay-populated ridings: St George, in downtown Toronto, and Ottawa Centre. In the absence of gay political activity — also a change from 1981 — there were no province-wide efforts to solicit candidates' viewpoints on matters of concern to homosexual communities. "Housing is a more important issue here," said Heidi McDonnell, a member of the collective which publishes *GO Info*, the monthly paper of Gays of Ottawa.

Supporting gay rights in St George riding "is a pretty standard thing for candidates to do," said CGRO's Tom Warner. "They would be crazy not to."

Tom Warner, whose involvement with the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) affords him a broad picture of political events in this province, admits that "CGRO's priorities have changed since 1981. We are currently working on a brief regarding discrimination and the human rights code."

St George, which includes most of Toronto's gay ghetto, was pursued by Tory Susan Fish, who maintained her incumbency by a narrow



Will the Tories listen this time? Susan Fish, PC MPP for St George, at her 1981 victory party with defeated gay candidate George Hislop

margin. Fish, whose popularity in the last election gave her 4,000 more votes than her nearest competitor, once again portrayed herself as the political Pollyana she really is. Her greatest asset for her gay constituents was her ability to secure funding for the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT). Phil Shaw, ACT's media relations officer, praises Fish for "putting money where her mouth is. Her claims that she has had a lot to do with establishing ACT are well-founded, and she remains a valiant supporter." Beyond having the political acumen to transform crisis into votes, Fish told *TBP* that she has always been a devoted worker in the areas of human rights and "will continue to discuss gay rights issues with my colleagues." It is interesting to note that not one of her Conservative "colleagues" voted for a 1981 amendment to include sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Has anything changed to make them listen in 1985?

Diana Hunt, Fish's nearest rival, enjoyed enormous gains as the NDP doubled its 1981 tally and leap-frogged past the Liberal candidate to finish second, just 700 votes short of victory. A lawyer and tenants' rights activist, Hunt was hampered by a lack of senior organizers. She spoke of her aspiration to become "the Svend Robinson of Ontario" and assessed the current campaign as a "pretend election" for the Miller government. Her literature included her party's claim that (now-deceased) NDP MPP James Renwick moved the aforementioned 1981

amendment, a distinction which in fact, fell to Renwick only because Liberal Shelia Copps, the intended mover, arrived late. (Renwick is on record as having been worried about "a legitimate fear people have where homosexuals and children are concerned.") Hunt maintained that she could not be responsible for Renwick's views and she condemned former party leader Michael Cassidy's public backtracking on the gay rights issue: "That is not a strategy I would support."

"I favor censorship due to my experience as a woman."

— Susan Fish, while admitting that she does not always agree with the decisions of the Ontario Film Review Board.

In Ottawa Centre, PC candidate Graham Bird was eager to win. In what appeared to be last minute desperation, he sent a "Message to the Gay Community" to the subscribers of *GO Info* in which he proclaimed "I am not anti-gay." This announcement was intended to neutralize the effect of his opposition to a grant to a gay organization "because I felt the Gay Community could raise money without the use of the limited City of Ottawa tax funds." Perhaps he meant that tax dollars should be disbursed only to heterosexual taxpayers. After stating that he "will not use public dollars to make a political statement," he fished for votes by implying that he would do his best to set up an AIDS clinic in Ottawa. He only emphasized his lack of famili-

arity with gay concerns by referring to persons with AIDS as "aids victims" (note the use of lower case letters). The NDP incumbent, Evelyn Gigantes, calmly took out a full-page ad in *GO Info* and gave the NDP pro-gay stand prominence. Final result: a 3,000-vote margin for Gigantes.

Focal points and issues remained non-existent for most Ontarians, however. Nineteen-eighty-one, though it saw the election of a majority Conservative government, was a year filled with debate. 1985 has shown us a different story. Tom Warner said that CGRO was not taking a strong role in the election because "we lack the people and the resources. According to our experience, it would not pay off to take an active role in this campaign." Warner blamed the low profiles of the major parties and their no-image campaigns on "a general lack of confidence in the political process felt by the voters in this province. They want to be assured that everything is running smoothly."

Narrowing the focus to St George, Warner thinks that the issue of inclusion of sexual orientation in the human rights code as supported by the candidates is token. "It is a pretty standard thing for candidates in St George to do," explains Warner. "They would be crazy not to." Warner concludes by stating that any party in

power would probably not move quickly to act on gay causes. Manitoba, where the NDP rules, is a good example of government dragging its heels.

"...to each according to his need."

— Joseph Mifsud, the Liberal candidate for St George, quotes Karl Marx at an all-candidates meeting.

As election night drew near, the campaign struggled to come out of its coma. Miller showed some signs of life, blasting the *NDP* for thriving on "hate and misery." At a dance sponsored by the Gay Community Dance Committee in Toronto, the three major parties each set up a table next to the coat check. *NDP* candidates for the three downtown Toronto ridings showed up, but the other parties' candidates sent representatives. Susan Fish, perhaps sensing the appeal of Diana Hunt, emphasized her own coziness with gays in

a candidate summary presented in the *Toronto Star*. Mifsud circulated literature stressing homosexual concerns and containing endorsements from gay activist Peter Maloney, a contestant for the 1981 Liberal nomination in St George, and George Hislop, who ran as an independent in the same riding in 1981. In Ottawa Centre, Graham Bird took out an ad in *GO Info*.

Ontarians dumped the Conservatives in favour of the Liberals who, besides winning the anti-Miller vote, won more votes province-wide than did the Tories. Bill Davis, former Ontario premier, doing a stint as colour commentator for a Toronto television station, blanched as dismal Tory results rolled in. Miller was quick to point out the next day that he was not allowed to be himself during the campaign, but conceded that "Last night all the rules changed." His Conservatives had almost followed the federal Liberals,

who lost in a remarkably similar inept campaign last September.

"Susan is entitled to her views as an individual voicing the concerns of her constituents. Our party line is that we have no intention of changing our views regarding sexual orientation."

— a PC official explains why Susan Fish is allowed to be pro-gay.

Sometimes, it seems as if we're running on the spot; gay rights, like the horizon, never seem to get any closer. Perhaps, as Tom Warner points out, it is better to "wait and deal with the new legislature." The Conservatives will still be in power, at least until their first Throne speech in a few weeks time. But with only 52 Tories facing 73 opposition members across the floor, what happens after that is anybody's guess.

Andrew Lesk ●

Fifty-nine days and still hungry

Richard North ends his fast, but the campaign for rights in Manitoba continues

WINNIPEG — A gay hunger-striker who had hoped to pressure Manitoba's *NDP* government into adding protection for gays to its human rights legislation ended his 59-day-old fast May 5 after developing problems with his vision. Despite almost daily publicity in the local media, he did not succeed in swaying the government.

In a dramatic bid to arouse public pressure in support of recommendations made by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, one of which was the inclusion of sexual orientation among the forbidden grounds of discrimination, long-time gay activist Richard North began a hunger strike March 8.

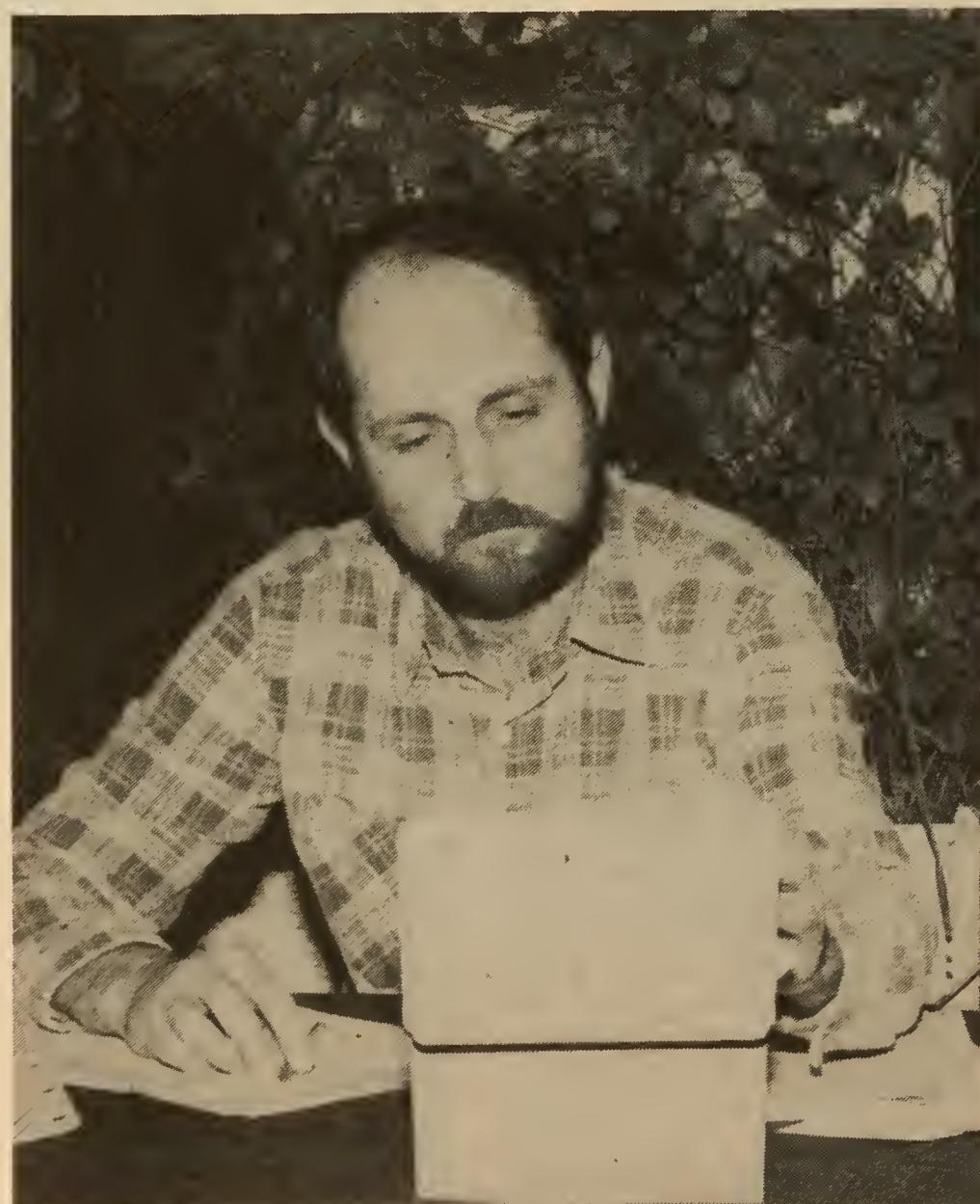
Going on the experience of the Irish hunger-strikers, North believed that he could hold out for eight weeks without suffering permanent damage. For as much as seven of those eight weeks, it seemed that he had underestimated his staying power and that he could, if necessary, push his water-only fast further. Only in the eighth week did serious deterioration become evident, so that a ninth week (63 days), ending on May 9, became the goal.

"I am not out to kill myself," North explained. "If a self-styled humanitarian government can let even one individual come this close to death before they'll implement their own policy, they would let me die and then go on doing nothing. So long as I'm alive, I can go on prodding them."

Now his hunger strike has ended without pushing the government into action. Was it worth it?

"We may not get the Act changed this session, but we are certainly miles closer to it than we were three months ago," North says. "For most Manitobans gay rights was a non-issue. If their eyes lighted on a news item once a year, that would be about the extent of it. Over these past nine weeks scarcely a day has gone by without something coming out, in the papers, over the radio, on television. And it has almost without exception been positive. The most negative comment has been (Attorney General) Penner's rot about our being sufficiently protected by the general clauses — even he does not manage to say that we ought *not* to be protected. There has been lots of opportunity for the loonies to jump up and down, but they haven't done it publicly, so what most people have been reading and hearing is a straightforward plea for social justice."

Media interest was kept alive by the string of



Hunger striker Richard North: "So long as I'm alive I can go on prodding them"

"open letters" delivered by North to Penner and Phillips (*NDP* caucus chair) each day of the legislature's sitting, and by a series of press conferences organized by the Committee for the Inclusion of "Sexual Orientation" in the Manitoba Human Rights Act: during April, three meetings highlighted statements from church representatives, from Manitoba gay organizations, and from labour organizations. Some incidental notice came in connection with the current AIDS blood-testing controversy.

Ironically, in a campaign so much in the best tradition of non-violence and deliberately kept so low as to be eminently ignorable, the one sensa-

tional headline (*The Winnipeg Sun*, April 15) proclaimed: "They Are Terrorists And Their Weapon Is... DEATH BY HUNGER STRIKE." The sensationalism was what most Winnipeggers would take as characteristic of the *Sun*, but its source was a University of Manitoba political science professor, and it was the one black mark on the otherwise conscientious and fair-minded reportage of the *Sun*. But the *Free Press* so down-played, to the point of ignoring, the campaign that it called down upon itself a rebuke from *The Jewish Post* (April 4). Only on April 21 did the *Free Press* editorialize on "Rights for homosexuals." "Not only is (the government's)

political timidity unfair to homosexuals, it threatens to short-change Manitoba society. Like all other forms of irrational exclusion, discrimination against homosexuals can deprive society of the full contribution of some of its most talented citizens."

But the gay community has been particularly heartened by expressions of support from other minority groups, from civil rights organizations, and from such sensitive areas as the teaching profession.

Early in the campaign (March 17) black columnist Norman McCurdy wrote in *The Winnipeg Sun*: "Now, here in Manitoba and across the nation, the continent and the world, (gays) are waging a war to be allowed to be themselves... and not have to hide what they are from themselves or anyone else. These feelings are something that I, as a black man, can relate to directly.... Please, let's learn to accept them for what they are and go about co-existing with them, not fearing and rejecting them."

An April 4 editorial in *The Jewish Post*, comparing Jewish and homosexual persecution, ended with the words: "Hopefully, Winnipeg Jews who read this editorial and are prepared to show such compassion will let Roland Penner know that in their view, legal protection for gays should be a priority for Manitoba's government. Hopefully too, rabbis in this city and other community leaders will start accepting gayness as an issue on the Jewish agenda — as something that needs to be discussed and better understood, rather than being treated as an issue that dares not even speak its name."

Manitoba Teachers Society president Murray Smith affirmed that he would support a union resolution calling for an end to discrimination against gay teachers, saying that he didn't believe any teacher should be discriminated against or reprimanded because of sexual preference. "The Society has fought school boards on such cases in the past."

The hunger strike must end, but the campaign continues with a vigour and a steadfastness it has not known in the past. A new pressure point emerges in the hearings of the federal Committee on Equality Rights.

Rick North's hunger strike has made it impossible for any Manitoba government to consider human rights legislation without considering the sexual orientation amendment. Gay rights has come to centre-stage in Manitoba politics.

Ted Millward ●

Quotes of the month

"I don't think of the police as being accountable. When they talk to us, we listen."

— Clare Westcott, now chairman of the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Police Commissioners.

"Wow, those are really going to keep a lot of stuff out.... There won't be any need for a review board."

— Jillian Ridington, chair of the BC periodical review board, rejoicing over new federal law regulating the importation of books and magazines.

Gay games: more success, less stress

Mayor Harcourt supports the sports fest, and backs a bid to host the World Games in 1990

VANCOUVER — More than 200 athletes from across Canada and the United States are expected to attend the third annual Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Summer Games from August 1 to 5.

Participants will compete in soccer, golf, softball, volleyball, swimming and several other sports. This year's motto is "more success, less stress."

The games will conclude with a sports picnic August 5 and an awards banquet August 6.

Vancouver's Pride Festival Week is August 2 to 11. It will feature a parade, a rally at Sunset Beach and possibly a carnival.

Mayor Michael Harcourt met March 7 with Richard Dopson, chair of the Metropolitan Vancouver Athletic and Arts Association, the umbrella organization that sponsors the summer games, and Malcolm Crane, chairperson of the Pride Festival, to express his support for both events. Harcourt also promised to send a letter to San Francisco Mayor Diane Feinstein, supporting the athletic association's bid to host the 1990 World Gay Games. He felt the event's impact on tourism and the economy and the prestige of Vancouver's gay and lesbian community would be enormous.

Ric Taylor ●



Muscle flexing and some loose jaws

Rumours routs a bashers' attack; finds the police more belligerent

HALIFAX — Staff suffered minor injuries and there was some property damage April 19 when six men attacked Rumours, the licenced disco operated by Halifax's Gay Alliance for Equality. Four of the men have been identified as bouncers for local straight lounges. "There were some loose jaws," says Rumours manager Brenda Bryan, "and the bulletin board was smashed. The damage wasn't extensive." Staff succeeded in driving the men away.

"We don't consider it a particularly anti-gay

attack," says Bryan, pointing out that the men, after they left Rumours, attacked a heterosexual establishment where one of them worked. "They were flexing their muscles." One of the men seized an axe-handle which the Rumours bouncer had used to defend herself and subsequently used it in the attack on the other club. According to Bryan, who was not on duty the night of the attack, some of staff are reluctant to identify their assailants. She criticized the "belligerence" of the officer who responded to the club's distress call. "He didn't take any names," she says. "He didn't seem to give a damn." Legal action is still being investigated, but Bryan hopes to see charges laid and to lodge a complaint about the police response to the incident.

Robin Metcalfe (GANG) ●

Five years ago:

May, 1980: Claiming she'd lived through "20 years of hell... I had to get out of the marriage or have a nervous breakdown," anti-gay crusader and good-time-girl Anita Bryant filed for a divorce from her hubby, Bob Green.

June 3, 1980: A contract between the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the federal government — which included a non-discrimination clause protecting gays — was approved, marking the first time federal employees won such protection.

Seven years, three months and fifteen days ago... more or less, the porn squad raided the offices of *The Body Politic* and carted off 12 boxes of material in response to the magazine's publication of an article called "Men Loving Boys Loving Men" in its 39th issue. On April 15, 1985, the police were back — not to seize anything, but to return the last of their 1977 haul.

TBP staff members Sonja Mills and Gillian Rodgerson, pictured below going through the boxes with Gerald Hannon, were only 15 and 17 years old when the material was taken. For them, and for older members of staff, it was like opening a time capsule. There were subscription copies of Issue 39 that had been about to be mailed, manuscripts and classified ads that never got into print, and letters to the editor — some of them thanking us for printing the article. Financial and business records were also seized and, in a final Grinch-like move, the police had even taken the sign from the front door.

None of the material was ever introduced as evidence in the long series of trials and appeals which, after six years, resulted in the magazine's full acquittal. Efforts to get the material back were delayed when the police initially refused to deliver it, saying that if we wanted it we'd have to come pick it up! Under pressure from TBP's lawyer, they relented and hauled it back on their own.

Long-time staff member Rick Bébout recalled that on the day the material was taken away, he feared we'd never publish again. A few hours after signing the waybill for the cops' final special delivery, he took the 114th issue off to the printer. ▼

BC: second-guessing Customs

Border restrictions make local censors redundant, but they don't plan to go away

VANCOUVER — Recent amendments to the Customs Tariff Act may make the task of the British Columbia periodical review board redundant.

Jillian Ridington, chair of the board, was quoted by Canadian Press April 19 as saying, "Wow, these are really going to keep a lot of stuff out. These are tougher than the attorney general's guidelines we work under. If they hold themselves to them, they will keep a lot of stuff out that was allowed in before. There won't be any need for a review board."

But, Nick Kravac, vice-president and general manager of Vancouver Magazine Service, one of the participating periodical distribution companies, told TBP: "It (the board) is still in place. We all support it. It hasn't changed."

The three-person board was set up voluntarily by BC magazine distributors, with help from the office of the provincial attorney general, to examine what Kravac called "men's sophisticated titles" (such as *Penthouse* and *Stag*) for possible violation of "community standards" before the magazines were sent to stores for sale. The board members were chosen by a steering committee selected from names suggested by the AG's office and the magazine companies themselves.

The board's work began in December 1984, but it wasn't until February 1985 that Bruce Smith, who handles magazines for Little Sister's, a Vancouver gay bookstore, realized that a lot of the gay men's porn magazines that the shop normally carried weren't being delivered. Smith says it took him a while to notice because Canada Customs has held back magazines from the US

before and he just assumed that it was happening again. But he saw a TV programme discussing the periodical review board and wondered if it might have something to do with the missing magazines. He estimates that 56 percent of the gay male porn that Little Sister's used to receive from Vancouver Magazine Service was stopped by the board. This amounts to about three-quarters of the porn that the store sells.

Smith contacted his sales agent, who spoke with a representative from VanMag. Eventually, he was offered back issues of magazines that had been cleared by the board, but never sent to the stores. In this way, in February, Little Sister's got the December 1984 issue of *In Touch* and the October 1984 *Blueboy*. He was told that he could request individual issues of magazines, but that they would not automatically be sent to him.

Ironically enough, with the announcement of the amendments to the Customs Tariff Act, the situation seems to have improved. "We've been receiving our magazines with no problem whatsoever," Smith said.

Little Sister's hesitates to order magazines such as *In Touch* directly from the American publishers because they fear running afoul of Customs. Smith explained that the store is not in a financial position to enter into legal proceedings.

Before the introduction of the new customs measures, which expire June 30, 1986, the legal department at Vancouver City Hall was instructed by the city council to study various kinds of anti-pornography laws, but so far no proposals have been made. A representative of the depart-



photo: Shelly Wright

Six days of distraction

Police, censors and politicians ignore the Ontario Open Screenings

TORONTO — The organizers of Ontario Open Screenings: Six Days of Resistance Against the Censor Board have declared it a victory over the Ontario Film Review Board, according to its organizers. The coalition of artists, producers, writers, feminists, gays and lesbians screened documentaries, feature films and experimental works for more than a week, beginning April 18.

John Greyson, a coalition member whose participation involved the screening of some of his video work, was pleased by the fact that the censors did not intervene. "The consensus is that since they (the Film Review Board) did not act, they should not have jurisdiction over our work." An example of the board's backtracking was the uninterrupted screening of *Taxi Zum Klo*, a previously banned film depicting the sex life of a promiscuous gay teacher.

"Right from the start we designed the protest as a public education forum and I feel we have succeeded," continued Greyson. "Our strategy was to organize the province and present to the board an organized front which, as we proved, would be impossible to break." Greyson acknowledges, however, that the screenings were overshadowed by the recent election, and that the government's priorities might have been focused elsewhere.

Another protest organizer, Colin Campbell, agrees with Greyson's assessment. "We do not view this as a one-shot situation," Campbell adds. "Participants are committed to the idea and will continue to be involved." Campbell downplays the low profile the print media gave the screenings, stating that they did not totally understand the intent of the coalition. "The focus of the media is conflict," he says, "and we did not give them any action stories."

The lone "casualty" of Six Days was the screening of *Pretty Baby* April 23 in Kingston. Scheduled to be presented at the National Film Theatre at Queen's University, the showing of the previously banned film was cancelled by Dr J A Bennett, Vice-Principal of Services at Queen's. Ross Turnbull, the director who set up the screening, was angered by Bennett's unannounced action. "Queen's could have put in a disclaimer," says Turnbull who is considering sending an internal response to Bennett. The Kingston *Whig-Standard*, in an editorial, slammed the cancellation, calling it "a cowardly act."

A follow-up letter is being sent to participants in the continuing effort to maintain the coalition.

Andrew Lesk ●

The old scissors with a new name

Court battle goes on to topple censors who now "review"

TORONTO — The Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society (OFAVAS) is again poised to topple the Ontario Censor Board (reborn of late as the Ontario Film Review Board).

OFAVAS filed suit April 26 in the Divisional Court of the Supreme Court of Ontario, alleging that the amended Ontario Theatres Act is an unconstitutional restriction on freedom of expression.

Three years ago a similar legal challenge by OFAVAS resulted in the Ontario Court of Appeal upholding a Divisional Court ruling that the cen-

sor board was in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Court of Appeal went further and struck down Section 35 of the Act, which required that all film and videotapes be approved by the board before public exhibition in Ontario. But the Ontario government was granted a stay of execution while it appealed the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. That appeal is still pending.

Then, to circumvent the effect of the court rulings, the name of the board was changed and its powers expanded to include control over videotapes shown in the home. Other amendments to the Act required all distributors and exhibitors of films and videotapes to be licensed and required occasional exhibitors to obtain licenses for their projection equipment.

These tactics forced OFAVAS to launch a new round of legal actions, even while defending their earlier victories. As in the first action, at the centre of the present action is the film *Amerika* by Vancouver filmmaker Al Razutis. The film deals with the exploitation of women in the media. A segment of the film entitled "A Message from Our Sponsor" delivers its message by intercutting footage from television commercials with short clips from pornographic films. Although the film has never been the object of obscenity charges, the Ontario censor board refuses to allow the film to be shown uncut.

Because it must respond to the Ontario Theatres Act as recently amended, the present suit challenges not only the regulations governing exhibition, but also those recently added to cover distribution.

The suit will not be heard in Divisional Court until this fall at the earliest.

Ric Taylor ●

AIDS

Mayoral awareness — on time this time

Eggleton beats procrastination to proclaim 1985 AIDS Week

TORONTO — In marked contrast to last year, Toronto's mayor and the Metropolitan Toronto chairman have both backed the city's second AIDS Awareness Week, planned by the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) for June 10 to 16 this year.

Last year, Mayor Art Eggleton did not issue a proclamation of the week until it was too late for the proclamation to be used in attendance-building publicity (see *TBP*, July/August 1984). Further, no expression of regret over the delay and its effects was forthcoming. The mayor's office rejected an allegation that the delay was calculated to avoid having his support of the week made public.

This year, however, far in advance of the event, AIDS Awareness Week has been proclaimed by the mayor and endorsed by Metro Toronto Chairman Dennis Flynn.

Each day of the week will have a different focus. On Monday, June 10, a press conference will deal with "AIDS and the Heterosexual Connection." The evening will feature a performance piece entitled "Caught in the Act: A Safe Sex Cabaret."

Tuesday will focus on "AIDS and the Health of the Gay Movement," with a panel discussion of

Network is *The Body Politic*'s listing of community groups and services of interest to lesbians and gay men throughout Canada. It can help you get in touch with what's going on where you live — and you can help us keep it up-to-date by letting us know about activities in your area.

To get your group to be listed, or to update any of the information provided here, write: **Network**, *The Body Politic*, Box 7289, Stn A, Toronto ON M5W 1X9.



Alcoholics Anonymous, International Advisory Council for Homosexual Men and Women, Box 492, Village Stn, New York NY 10014.

Archives for the Protection of Gay History and Literature, Box 6368, Stn A, Saint John NB E2L 4R8.

Atlantic Lesbian and Gay Association/Association des Lesbiennes et des gais de l'Atlantique, contact GAE (Halifax), FLAG (Fredericton) or Northern Lambda Nord (Western NB).

Bisexuals International, Box 107, 2039 Walnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA. (215) 634-6244, Sun-Fri, 11 pm-3 am.

Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay Concerns (BMC), Box 24060, Washington, DC 20024. (202) 462-2595.

Canadian Gay Archives, Box 639, Stn A, Toronto ON M5W 1G2. (416) 364-2759.

Dignity/Canada/Dignité, Box 1912, Winnipeg MB R3C 3R2. (204) 772-4322.

Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals, Box 291, Stn A, Hamilton ON L8N 3C8. (416) 529-7884.

SW Ontario: Ms R M Schwartzentruber, 21 Cherry St, Kitchener ON N2G 2C5. (519) 576-5248.

Gay Interest Group, Canadian Library Association, Box 1912, Winnipeg MB R3C 3R2.

International Gay Association, International Secretariat, c/o RFSL, Box 350, S-101 24 Sweden, ph: 46-8-848050, or 845576. Action Secretariat, c/o NVIHC/COC, Rozendaal 1, 1016 NX Amsterdam, The Netherlands. ph: 31-20-234596. Women's Secretariat, c/o SHRG, 58A Broughton St, Edinburgh, Scotland EH1 3SA.

International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS), c/o Centre Femme, 5 Boulevard St Georges, Geneva CH-1025, Switzerland.

Lesbians Across Canada Meet and Mate Association, c/o S O'Reilly, Box 1647, Stn E, Victoria BC V8W 2Y1.

Personalized contact and correspondence service for women.

Ligo de Samseksamaj Geesperantistoj, gay Esperanto organization, 100 Crerar Ave, Ottawa ON K1Z 7P2.

New Democratic Party Gay Caucus, Box 792, Stn F, Toronto ON M4Y 2N7.

Okanagan Gay Organization. Mutual support. The group can be contacted directly by phone through the Kelowna Crisis Centre, 763-8008.

Port Alberni

The Island Gay Society — Port Alberni, Box 158, V9Y 1R1. 724-4914.

Nanaimo

The Island Gay Society — Nanaimo, Box 127, V9R 5K4. 756-0370. Holds monthly socials last Sat of each month at the Double Dragon Restaurant, 9 pm.

Kamloops

Thompson Area Gay Group, Box 3343, V2C 6B9. Welcomes women and men to regular meetings, discussions, social events. Info, newsletter, peer support, friendship.

Kelowna

Okanagan Gay Organization.

Mutual support. The

group can be contacted direct-

ly by phone through the Kel-

owna Crisis Centre, 763-8008.

Gays and Lesbians of UBC,

Box 9, Student Union Bldg, U

of British Columbia,

V6T 1W5. 228-4638. Meets

Thurs at 12:30 pm (see *The*

Uyssey for room).

Gazebo Connection (busi-

ness & professional women's

group), 382-810 W Broad-

way, V5Z 4C9. 984-8744.

Greater Vancouver Business

Association, c/o Dwayne Sul-

livan, 941 Davie St, V6Z 1B9.

Integrity: Gay Anglicans

and their friends, Box

34161, Stn D, V6J 4N1.

873-2925.

Knights of Malta, Dogwood

Chapter Society, Box 336-810

West Broadway, V5Z 1J8.

Lambda (Gay Al-Anon). Joe

at 689-7681 or Mike at

327-8423.

North American Transvestite-Transsexual Contact Service, Box 3, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA. (206) 624-8266.

Section on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Psychology, c/o Canadian Psychological Association, 558 King Edward Ave, Ottawa ON K1N 7N6.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship Canada, Box 408, Stn C, Toronto ON M6J 3P5. (416) 533-5896.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc, Box 3840, Los Angeles CA 90078-3840 USA. (213) 876-2076.

Women's Archives, Box 928, Stn Q, Toronto ON M4T 2P1.

North American Transvestite-Transsexual Contact Service, Box 3, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA. (206) 624-8266.

Section on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Psychology, c/o Canadian Psychological Association, 558 King Edward Ave, Ottawa ON K1N 7N6.

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Women's Archives, Box 928, Stn Q, Toronto ON M4T 2P1.

North American Transvestite-Transsexual Contact Service, Box 3, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA. (206) 624-8266.

Section on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Psychology, c/o Canadian Psychological Association, 558 King Edward Ave, Ottawa ON K1N 7N6.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship Canada, Box 408, Stn C, Toronto ON M6J 3P5. (416) 533-5896.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc, Box 3840, Los Angeles CA

NETWORK

Vancouver Men's Chorus, 1270 Chestnut St, V6J 4R9. Rehearsals every Wed, 7:30 pm, at the Vancouver Academy of Music. For information phone Kevin at 731-1779 or Larry at 734-8802.

West End Softball Association, 755 Robson St, N° 299, V6G 1C9. Call Frank Hamper 255-4410.

West End Volleyball, 222-1500 Pendrell St. 669-6696.

Women in Focus, 204-456 W Broadway, V5Y 1R3. 872-2250.

Young Gay People, c/o SEARCH.

Younger Lesbian Drop-In every Sat, 3-5 pm at 1349 Burrard.

Zodiac Fraternal Society, Box 33872, Stn D, V6J 4L6.

Vernon

Vernon Alternative Lifestyle, RR 6, Site 17, Comp 19, V1T 6Y5.

Victoria

Alcoholics Anonymous (Gay), 383-9862.

Dignity Victoria, Box 845, Stn E, V8W 2R9. 385-1559.

Gay and Lesbian Organization of the University of Victoria (GLO), SUB, U of Victoria, Box 1700, V8W 2Y2.

The Island Gay Society — Victoria, Box 695, Stn E, V8W 2P9. 598-5480. Operates The IGS Café at James Bay Community Centre, 140 Oswego St, Sundays, 9:00 pm, with coffee or tea all night for \$2 cover charge.

Need (Victoria Crisis Line), 386-6323, 24 hrs. Some gay info available.

Womyn's Coffee House, 1923 Fernwood. Every Wed evening.

West Kootenay region

West Kootenay Gays and Lesbians, Box 642, Nelson V1L 4K5. Offering friendship, a newsletter, info and social events. Potluck third Sunday of month, 3-7 pm; contact Nelson Community Services Centre 352-3504 (24 hrs).

ALBERTA

TELEPHONE AREA CODE: 403

Provincial

Alberta Lesbian and Gay Rights Association (ALGRA), Box 1852, Edmonton T5J 2P2.

Alberta TV and TS Contact Club, Box 4667, Calgary T2T 5P1. Transvestite and transsexual contact service.

Calgary

Apollo — Friends in Sports, Box 6481, Stn D, T2P 2E1. Provides recreational activities to the gay community, including volleyball, slowpitch, curling, bowling, dances, car rallies and skiing. Hosts annual Western Cup Volleyball Tournament. Open to men and women. Info: Gay Lines, 234-8973.

Camp 181 Association, Box 702, Stn M, T2P 2J3. Dances, theme parties, campouts, sports and other activities for lesbians and gays.

Dignity/Calgary, Box 1414, Stn M, T2P 2L6.

Gay Lelss Link. Non-challenging, non-sexual social organization. Box 1812, Stn M, T2P 2L8.

Gay Lines, 234-8973. Community information.

Gay Students Association, c/o U of Calgary Students Clubs, Rm 209, MacEwan Hall, 2500 University Dr NW, T2N 1N4.

Imperial Court of the Chinook Arch, 282-6393. Entertainments and social events.

Lesbian Information Line (LIL), 265-9458, Tues-Fri, 8-10 pm, with 24 hr answering service. Operated by Womyn's Collective.

Lesbian Mothers, Lynn at 264-6328 or 275-8362, or call LIL. Potluck first Sun of each month.

Lesbian Outreach and Support Team, Box 6093, Stn A, T2H 2L4. 281-2895.

Metropolitan Community Church, 204-16 Ave, NW, T2M 0H4. 277-4004. Services Sun 11:30 am and 7 pm at above address.

New Horizons (physically disabled gays). c/o 1927 30th St SW, T3E 2L5. Or phone Gay Lines, 234-8973.

Womyn's Collective, 265-9458. Dances, library, lesbian drop-ins every Tues. Operates LIL.

Edmonton

Dignity Edmonton Dignité, Box 53, T5B 2B7. 469-4286.

Edmonton Roughnecks Recreation Association, c/o GATE. Volleyball, softball, gymnastics.

Gay Alliance Toward Equality, Box 1852, T5J 2P2.

Office: 10173-104 St. 424-8361. Info and counseling, Mon-Sat, 7-10 pm, Sun 2-5 pm. Also coffeehouses, socials, newsletter, resource library.

Gay Fathers & Lesbian Mothers. For info call 424-8361.

InterEd, Box 12G, 9820-104 St, T5K 0Z1. 421-7629 (Jim).

Mandate: Sober, an AA group for men and women.

Unitarian Church, 12530-110 Ave, Saturdays, 8 pm. Closed discussion; last Saturday of the month is open. AA Central office: 482-6783.

Metropolitan Community Church of Edmonton, Box 1312, T5J 2M8. 438-5168. Sunday worship at 7:30 pm, 126 Street - 110 Avenue.

Privacy Defence Committee, c/o Box 1852, T5J 2P2.

Royalist Social Society of Northern Alberta (Imperial Court of the Wild Rose), 10820-38 Av NW, T6E 2E6.

The Vocal Minority, "to educate the general population about the multiplicity and richness of our lives through public musical performances." 426-1516 or 426-1246.

Womanspace, a social and recreational group for lesbians. c/o Everywoman's Place, 9926-112 St. Phone Jeanne, 433-3559 or Liz, 986-0263.

Grande Prairie

The Peace Gay Association, Box 1492, T8V 4Z3. Social and support group for NW Alberta.

Red Deer

Gay Association of Red Deer, Box 356, T4N 5E9.

Lethbridge

Dignity Lethbridge, Box 2262, T1J 4K7. Phoneline 381-6905, 7-9 pm.

MB

Dignity/Saskatchewan (gay Catholics and friends), Box 3181, Regina S4P 3G7.

Gay Rights Subcommittee, Saskatchewan Association for Human Rights, 305-116 3rd Ave S, Saskatoon S7K 1L5. 244-1933.

Lesbian Association of Southern Saskatchewan, Box 4033, Regina S4P 3R9. 522-4522 or 352-8397.

Prince Albert

Prince Albert Gay Community Centre (The Zodiac Club), Box 1893, S6V 6J9. 1-24 10th St, E. 922-4650.

Phone line Wed-Thurs, 8-10 pm, social evenings Fri-Sat, 10 pm-2 am.

Regina

Dignity Regina, Box 3181, S4P 3G7.

Gay Athletic Guild, Box 3414, S4P 3J8.

Gay Community of Regina (gay community council), Box 3414, S4P 3J8.

Gay Information Services, Box 3414, S4P 3J8. 522-5422, Sun & Mon, 8-10 pm; 24 hr recorded message at other times.

Gay Parents, Box 3414, S4P 3J8.

Gay Religious Group, Box 3414, S4P 3J8.

Gay Women's Phone Line, 352-1041, Wed, 8-10 pm. Box 4033, S4P 3A2.

Rumours (gay community centre), 2069 Broad St (back entrance). 522-7343 (until June 30).

Regina Parents, Families and Friends of Gays, Box 3414, S4P 3J8.

Regina Women's Community and Rape Crisis Centre, 219-1810 Smith St, S4P 2N3. 522-2777, 352-7688.

Women 30 Plus, Box 1113, S4P 3B2. Social group for women 30 and over.

Saskatoon

Gay & Lesbian Support Services (GLSS), 217-116 3rd Ave S. Operates Gayline. Mailing address: Box 8581, S7K 6K7.

Gay History Group, c/o GLSS.

Gay/Lesbian Community Centre, Box 1662, S7K 3R8. Phone Gayline for info on dance and special event locations and dates.

Gayline, 665-9129, Sun-Thurs, 8-11 pm, Community information.

Gays and Lesbians at the University of Saskatchewan (GLUS), Box 482, Sub PO N° 6, S7N 0W0. Open to staff and students of the Saskatoon campus; holds social and educational events.

Gay Political Action Committee, c/o Box 2943, Stn M, T2P 3C3. Education and lobbying.

Live and Let Live (Gay AA), c/o Gay and Lesbian Support Services. Meets Fri, 8 pm at GLSS.

Metamorphosis 1985, Box 113, S7K 3K1. 955-1270.

Plans annual Thanksgiving weekend celebration.

Southern Prairie Athletic Association, Box 8581, S7K 6K7.

SK

SASKATCHEWAN

TELEPHONE AREA CODE: 306

Provincial

Brethren/Mennonite Council for Gay Concerns (BMC) Manitoba, Box 2846, Winnipeg R3C 4B4.

Brandon

Gay Friends of Brandon, 727-1685, Wed 7-10 pm; Sat 1-4 pm.

Portage-la-Prairie

Bi-Women's Support Group, Box 820, RIN 3C3. 857-5295. For bisexual women.

Thompson

Gay Friends of Thompson, Box 157, RIN 1N2.

Winnipeg

Coalition for Gays and Lesbians of the United Church. 453-3984 (Eric) or 452-2853 (Dave).

A Little Bit of Magic, Inc. A non-profit introduction service for gay men and lesbians. 775-4838.

Council on Homosexuality and Religion, Box 1912, R3C 3R2. 452-1813 or 786-3976. Worship, counseling, library.

Dignity/Winnipeg, Box 1912, R3C 3R2.

Gai Livraison, Box 1912, R3C 3R2. Pamphlets and booklets on homosexuality.

Gay AA New Freedom Group, Box 2481, or contact through Manitoba Central Office, 233-3508.

Gay AIAnon Group, Info: Gays for Equality.

Gay Community Centre, 277 Sherbrooke St. 786-1236. Incorporating Giovanni's Room, a cafe for lesbians and gay men. Open every day except Sunday at 5:30 pm. Fully licenced.

Gay Fathers Winnipeg, Box 2221, R3C 3R5. 786-3976. (Thurs eves, 7:30 pm-10 pm).

Gay Outdoors Group, c/o Gays for Equality.

Gay Parents, c/o Gays for Equality.

Gays for Equality (GFE), Box 27, UMSU, U of Manitoba, R3T 2N2. 786-3976. Office: Suite 2, Gay Community Centre, 277 Sherbrooke St. Counselling, info, rap sessions, public education and law reform. Lesbian counsellors on Tues evenings.

Gayline Hamilton. Info on all groups and activities, peer counselling. 523-7055 Wed-Sun, 7-11 pm.

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LETTER FROM

HALIFAX

Robin Metcalfe ●

Life in the Mondo Condo

If you come to Halifax this summer, you won't recognize the place. We seem to have become a metropolis. One suspects the bourgeoisie of playing tricks with imaginary money, pulling office towers from their sleeves like so many silk handkerchiefs. Restoration is reaching epidemic proportions. They've gone the whole schmeer: brick sidewalks, coachlamps, hookers on every corner.... It does impart a certain elegance to what was, admittedly, a rather shabby city, if one can stomach living in an historical fiction. Some of the new buildings were designed by real architects, not the illiterate engineers who dumped the likes of Scotia Square on us.

The Premier alleges that we are in the midst of an offshore boom. As NDP leader Alexa McDonough points out, the boom keeps getting further and further offshore. *Don't* come back from Calgary looking for a job — whatever you may have heard on TV. Unless you're a specialist in capping blown-out oil wells, and think nothing of paying \$600 for a bachelor apartment. The rental market is tighter than John Buchanan's ass, with a vacancy rate of two percent and falling. There's no relief in sight for the worst housing crisis in Canada, unless you count all those \$250,000 condominiums going up in the South End.

Life in the Mondo Condo does have its consolations. Wormwood now shows obscure Italian films in two cinemas seven days a week. We went to see *The Times of Harvey Milk* and passed so many lesbians on the stairs that for a moment I thought Wormwood's had been converted back to the Turret. Not a dry eye in the bunch. Remember CKDU, the only station that would play Tom Robinson, even if it was just over the intercom in the Dal cafeteria? Well, they have an FM licence now, and can be heard by the normaloids in their Hyundai Ponys. Now that it's spring, the New Wavers have sprung up all around Sir Winnie on the lawn in front of the library, as numerous as crocuses, in about the same range of colours.

It seemed a sign of something, seeing the posters for the Milk film on all the telephone poles. People didn't even bother tearing them down. Maybe the homophobes are getting numb. There seemed to be a gay take-over of the art scene this winter: Jim MacSwain and Greg Wight in the On Masculinity show at Eye Level, Art by Gay Men at the Centre for Art Tapes, my own colour prints in the photo gallery at Wormwood's.... Some sort of independent gay male consciousness finally seems to be emerging in this city. The Gay Health Association was the first real sign of life. Did I tell you a bunch of us have been getting together to define our own agenda around porn? Or should I say "sexually fantastic literature," the term which presently has the group's favour? We're going to play Show and Tell and compare fantasies. Yum!

Believe it or not, the Chronically-Horrid *Chronicle-Herald* has found it possible to print the word "gay" without gagging. Must be the competition from the *Daily News* — rag that it is, it does carry gay stories, and doesn't even feel obliged to be condemnatory. Perhaps it's all those high-school students they hire as reporters....



The Wormwood screens Harvey Milk: former site of the Turret recalls its gay past

The BIG NEWS, of course, was the "hardcore" lesbians being booted out of CFS Shelburne. I'm surprised the Comical-Herald's typesetter wasn't struck by lightning, setting "lesbian" in bold caps on page one. It amazes me how the media can summon wide-eyed surprise about a story they have been studiously ignoring since before the Flood. You can't walk ten feet in Halifax without tripping over a gay ex-service-person. There's No Life Like It. Speaking of which, Darl Wood's new book should be out in September, from Ragweed Press in Charlottetown. Recently she's been the Most Wanted Woman in Halifax, a real walking, talking lesbian who was kicked out of the Forces and lived to tell the tale on *As It Happens*. I must say, it did the heart good to see Erik Nielsen having to justify a policy that had never been so publicly questioned.

War and peace have been on a lot of minds here lately. One of the "job-creation" schemes foisted on us recently has been the new Pratt and Whitney plant. As far as I could tell, it will mainly create work for a few robots in the Airport Industrial Park, but it ties us even closer to Ronald Reagan's plans for Peace through World Destruction. The profiteers of doom had a big party in December at the Hotel Nova Scotian to swap secrets on how to make a quick buck off the Apocalypse, and more than one member of our community was there to spoil the fun. You must have heard about the seventeen demonstrators hauled off in police vans? The Pentagon Party Poopers adopted a more mainstream name, AMIE(Against Military Industrial Expansion) in preparation for their trial, but not before they had a big benefit bash at Rumours.

I hardly go to the club anymore. Yes, me, the disco-bunny of yore. It just hasn't been the same since we lost the Turret. The Gay Alliance for Equality is trying to make amends by buying a house in the North End. It could be cosy, with a library and office and gay neighbours upstairs, but I worry it will be another albatross around the organization's neck.

All the interesting things seem to be happening

outside GAE. Maybe we try too hard — the people who haven't been burnt out have too much on their plate, and end up trying to do everything, poorly, instead of a few things well. The hiring of two part-time community organizers was supposed to mark a turn-around for the group, and to draw in new people, but already the selection process has caused dissension. Some charge that political compatibility with the present regime took precedence over a proven ability to do the job. I can't pretend to be impartial. Who can? The community is too small.

All is not gloom, however. The year began auspiciously, with the Canadian University Press conference at Oak Island. Elizabeth Donovan coaxed me down to a meeting of the gay and lesbian caucus, a room full of fresh young faces, all eager and intelligent. I felt like a daddy. It's the first time I've been that aware of a whole new generation of gay and lesbian activists. Don't believe what they say about Today's Apathetic Youth. That's members of *our* generation talking, as they float downriver through the Age of Disillusion.

Not all our contemporaries have been resting on their laurels. My favourite social worker, Ken Belanger, helped organize a weekend get-together for lesbian and gay professionals that attracted people from as far away as New Brunswick. The *Dal Gazette* called it a meeting of "gay Yuppies," which only confirms my suspicion that "yuppie" really stands for "young unemployed professional." No BMWs in this crowd. A lot of energy and competence, though. The network that grew out of that meeting has already taken on a life of its own.

Organizations like GAE develop a lot of inertia over the years. I feel like all our energy goes into propping up the structure. Instead we should be defining our skills and finding ways to link up around specific goals. Perhaps that's the way for the future. ●

Aging activist Robin Metcalfe has been writing for *The Body Politic* since just after the Flood.

Integrity/Ottawa, (gay Anglicans and their friends) c/o St George's Anglican Church, 152 Metcalfe St, K2P IN9. 235-2516, 9-5, Mon-Fri. Meets 2nd and 4th Weds at 7:30 pm, at St George's.

Lesbiennes et gais du campus/Lesbians and Gays on Campus, c/o SFUO, 85 rue Haste Street, K1N 6N5.

Live and Let Live Group for gay alcoholics. Contact GO. **Metropolitan Community Church,** Box 2979, Stn D, K1P 5W9. 232-0241.

Parents of Gays, Box 9094, K1G 3T8.

Peterborough

Area code: 705

Gays and Lesbians at Trent and Peterborough, Box 2467, K9J 7Y8. 742-6229. Office hours Mon 8-10 pm. Drop-in, Mon, 8 pm, 290 Rubidge St, 2nd fl (ring bell for entry); Live and Let Live Gay AA group, Wed, 8 pm; discussion group Thurs, 7:30 pm.

Sudbury

Area code: 705

Sudbury All Gay Alliance, Box 1092, Stn B, Sudbury, ON P3E 4S6. Phone: 674-3002, Tues, 7 pm-10 pm.

Thunder Bay

Area code: 807

Gays of Thunder Bay, Box 2155, P7B 5E8. 345-8011, Wed and Fri 7:30-9:30 pm. Recording other times. Meets 1st and 3rd Tues. Dances held monthly.

Northern Women's Centre, 316 Bay St, P7B 1S1. 345-7802.

Toronto

Area code: 416

AIDS Committee of Toronto, Box 55, Stn F, M4Y 2L4. 926-1626, Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm. Educates public about the syndrome, especially AIDS-affected communities, and provides support services to people with AIDS.

Affirmation, a support group for gay and lesbian Mormons and their friends. For information, write Drawer E622, Box 7289, Stn A, M5W 1X9. **Alcoholics Anonymous.** Lesbian/gay fellowships. 964-3962.

Association of Gay Social Workers, c/o 906-55 Isabella St, M4Y 1M8. Social work students also welcome.

AWARE, a support group for gay men and lesbians from Christian Reformed Churches, and their friends. Write c/o MCCT, 730 Bathurst St, Box K, Toronto, M5S 2R4. 925-0690.

Cabbagetown Group Softball League, Box 1113, Stn F, M4Y 2T8. **Branching Out, Lesbian culture resource centre.** Bnx 141, 2 Bloor St W, Ste 100-99, M4W 3E2.

Canadian Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (CUULGC), A support group for gay men and lesbians within Unitarian Universalist churches. c/o Canadian Unitarian Council, 175 St Clair Ave W, M4V 1P7. **Christos Metropolitan Community Church,** Box 1193, Stn F, M4Y 2T8. 968-7423. Christian church with special outreach to gay community, working in association with Gaycare Toronto.

Chutzpah, 730 Bathurst St, M5S 2R4. 489-4662. Group for Jewish gay men and lesbians.

Hassle-Free Clinic — Men, 556 Church St, 2nd fl, M4Y 2E3. 922-0603. VD info, testing and treatment. Hours: Mon, Wed, 4-9 pm; Tues, Thurs, 10 am-3 pm; Fri, 4-7 pm; Sat, 10 am-2 pm. Bath clinics every Wed evening at The Club and Roman's.

Committee to Defend John Damien, 291 Ontario St, Apt 6, M5A 2V8. 925-6729.

Dignity/Toronto, Box 249, Stn E, M6H 4E2. 960-3997. Group for gay and lesbian Catholics and friends.

Foolscape (Oral History Project), Conducting interviews with gay people. Lionel, 929-0564.

Federation of American and Canadian Transsexuals (FACT) — Toronto, 519 Church St Community Centre, M4Y 2C9. 625-2185.

Gay Alliance at York, c/o CYSF, 105 Central St, York University, 4700 Keele St, Downsview, ON M3J 1P3. 667-2515.

Gay Asians Toronto, Box 752, Stn F, M4Y 2N6.

Gay Association of Maritimers in Toronto, 730 Bathurst St, M5S 2R4. Support group for Maritimers moving to Toronto.

Gaycare Toronto, c/o 519 Church St Community Centre, M4Y 2C9. Phone: 243-5494, 7-10 pm, seven days a week. Free face-to-face counselling service, Thursdays 7-10 pm.

Gay Christian Counselling Service. Professional counseling, individual and couple, for gay men, lesbians and families of gays. Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto. For appt: 536-2848.

Gay Community Appeal of Toronto, Box 2212, Stn P, M5S 2T2. 869-3036. Fundraising for gay and lesbian community projects.

Gay Community Calendar. Call 923-GAYS (923-4297).

Box 8, Adelaide St Stn, M5C 2H8. 24-hour recorded message of weekly events. To get info listed call 656-0372 between 7-10 pm Mondays.

Gay Community Dance Committee (GCDC), 730 Bathurst St, M5S 2R4. Organizes community fund-raising dances.

Gay Courtwatch, Room 337, Old City Hall (Queen and Bay). 362-6928. Monitors gay-related cases and provides legal assistance.

Gay Fathers of Toronto, Box 187, Stn F, M4Y 2L5. Phone: 364-4164, Mon-Fri, 7-10 pm.

Gay Liberation Against the Right Everywhere (GLARE), Box 793, Stn Q, M4T 2N7.

Gay SIG, Drawer C622, c/o The Body Politic, Box 7289, Stn A, M5W 1X9. Group of gay members of MENSA in Canada.

Gay Self-Defence Group, 215 Danforth Ave, N° 4, M4K 1N2. 466-6020. Organizes courses in self-defence in and out of Toronto.

Gays and Lesbians at U of T, c/o SAC Office, 12 Hart House Circle, University of Toronto, M5S 1A1. Info: Chris (964-0701) or Eldon (927-8866).

Gays and Lesbians in Health Care, Box 6973, Stn A, M5W 1X7. 920-GLHC. Gay men and lesbians working and training in health-care delivery and research.

Gay/Lesbian Action for Disarmament (GLAD), Box 5794, Stn A, M5W 1P2. 921-1938.

Glad Day Bookshop, 598A Yonge St, 2nd floor, M5Y 2A6. 961-4161. Mon 10-8; Tue-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-6.

Glad Day Defence Fund, 648A Yonge St, M4Y 2A6. 961-4161.

Hassle-Free Clinic — Men, 556 Church St, 2nd fl, M4Y 2E3. 922-0603. VD info, testing and treatment.

Hours: Mon, Wed, 4-9 pm;

Tues, Thurs, 10 am-3 pm;

Fri, 4-7 pm; Sat, 10 am-2 pm.

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**LETTER FROM
MONTREAL**
Doug Janoff ●

Coming out of hibernation

An Orientalist once said that Montreal is one of the few feminine cities in North America. This yin energy, hibernating for so many months deep within the city's wintry womb, is surging down the slopes of Mount Royal, driving people out of the smoke-filled clubs and cafes on St Denis, and onto the smoke-filled terraces.

The Bud's case continues. More than 20 people charged with being found in a common bawdyhouse were to meet to discuss the trial on May 23. The Association pour les droits des gais du Québec (ADGQ) has been providing legal assistance. Meanwhile, another ADGQ sub-committee has been formed to offer assistance to a



Queenly array of talent: May 5 Café Commun AIDS benefit emcee Ken Morrison

new group of accused: 25 men were arrested at Club Sociale 485 April 12 on found-in and gross indecency charges. An eyewitness said 40 policemen stormed the club at 2 am and tore down a full-length nude poster on the washroom door to provide a fitting backdrop for police photos.

MARC-ARMS, the Montreal AIDS Resources Committee, will be getting some badly needed summer help. Thanks to a federal government employment grant, three students have been hired to increase AIDS awareness here.

A queenly array of talent helped raise \$150 for the AIDS Conference at the Café Commun May 5. Organizer Glen Watts said the idea began as a birthday party and blossomed into a hilarious evening of song and dance. Emcee Ken Morrison provided a 1980s rendition of the song "It Ain't Necessarily So."

*It ain't necessarily so
It ain't necessarily so
The hate made in headlines
the fear made in by-lines
It ain't necessarily so.
Oh, Harry he worked in a bank
Oh, Harry he worked in a bank
A closet professional
Till police raid confessional
Oh, Harry he jumped from the bank.
To stay out of trouble
Make use of the bubble
Play safe, bloodless and free
Give way to your passion
Let care be your ration
With doctors and Vitamin E.*

*I'm preachin' this sermon to show
That it ain't necessarily
Ain't necessarily, ain't necessarily so.*

Other performances included theatre improvisation, poetry, two original versions of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and the startling confessions of Yako, alias Lucette Ouellette.

The First National Conference on AIDS, held here May 10 to 12, was an historic event. But few people know the difficulties that organizers had to face. Conference organizer Rick Burzynski, who worked full-time on it since January, said that the biggest challenges facing MARC-ARMS were time and money. The whole thing had to be pulled off on a \$10,000 grant from Health and Welfare Canada. The Quebec government didn't give a penny. Even photocopying was done at various government offices on the sly. Despite the national focus, there was no money to pay travel expenses for out-of-province delegates.

But the biggest disappointment, according to Rick, was the lack of support in the Quebec gay community. A few weeks before the conference, he went to a well-known bar just off St Denis. I wouldn't exactly say it's an intellectual bar, but it's one of the few places where Montreal gays can see each other and don't have to scream at each other to be heard. Rick wanted to put up a poster. The owner refused, saying, "I don't put up posters of people starving in Ethiopia, why should I put up a poster about AIDS?" The owner was apologetic, said Rick, but pointed out that it would be bad for business: after all, people go out to bars to enjoy themselves and to forget about problems like AIDS. ●

Douglas Janoff will be writing regularly for The Body Politic from Montreal.

continued from page 19

ed on the terrible tragedy of AIDS. This tragedy has become a very personal one for me with the recent death from AIDS of the brother of one of my dearest friends." Carney also noted the need "to end personal and official discrimination."

The grant is being made by the regional office of the health department's Health Promotion Directorate, which has not yet committed itself to a specific sum. The funds will come out of the Health Promotion Contributions Programme and will be given over a two-year period. AIDS Vancouver Chairperson Gordon Price hopes for at least \$250,000. Price says he is "elated" over the finding, but cautions that the allocation has been "approved in principle" only, saying that the federal money is contingent upon funding from the City of Vancouver.

But Darryl Sturtevant, health promotion acting regional director, says there is no plan to make federal funding conditional upon additional money from the city, acknowledging only the city's contribution is "part of the context" in which details of the federal financing will be worked out.

Price says the money will be used by AIDS Vancouver to provide information and heighten public awareness of AIDS, to run support services for people with AIDS and to help build a network of concerned organizations. He targets June 1 as the startup date for expanded activity in these areas. However, Sturtevant said he was "looking at July 1" as the beginning of the grant period.

The funding comes at a critical time for AIDS Vancouver, according to Price. Responding to the increasing number of people with AIDS and PLTS in the Vancouver area has brought the over-worked staff of the organization to the brink of burn-out.

Neil Powers ●

NETWORK

Hassle-Free Clinic — Women, 556 Church St, 2nd fl., M4Y 2E3. 922-0566. Free medical clinic. Birth control and gynecological info. VD and pregnancy testing, abortion counselling and referrals. Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri, 10 am-3 pm; Tues, Thur, 4 pm-8 pm. Call ahead.

Integrity/Toronto, Box 873, Stn F, M4Y 2N9. Pastoral ministry for gay and lesbian Anglicans and friends. 593-6217. Chaplains available for pastoral counselling.

International Gay Association (Toronto), c/o Toronto Gay Community Council (see below).

International Women's Day Committee, Box 70, Stn F, M4Y 2L4. 789-4541. Independent socialist-feminist organization.

Judy Garland Memorial Bowling League. Info: bulletin boards in bars, or write c/o the Toronto Sports Alliance (see below). Sept-May season (Mon and Thurs evenings); also summer league.

Lesbian and Gay Academic Society, c/o SAC, 12 Hart House Circle, U of T, M5S 1A1. 533-0674 (Linda) or 924-6474 (Alexandra).

Lesbian and Gay History Group of Toronto, Box 639, Stn A, M5W 1G2. 961-7338. **Lesbian and Gay Pride Day Committee**, Box 793, Stn Q, M4T 2N7. Organizes annual summer celebration.

Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto, c/o 519 Church St Community Centre, M4Y 2C9.

Lesbian Incest Survivors Support Group, Info: 964-7477 (Rape Crisis Centre).

Lesbian Mothers' Defense Fund, Box 38, Stn E, M6H 4E1. 465-6822.

Lesbian PhoneLine, Box 70, Stn F, M4Y 2L4. 960-3249. Tues 7:30-10:30 pm. Recorded message other times. Speakers available.

Lesbian Speakers Bureau, Box 6597, Stn A, M5W 1X4. Info: Michelle at 789-4541 or Debbie at 964-7477. Speakers for myth-shattering seminars and workshops about lesbians.

Lesbians Against the Right, Box 6579, Stn A, M5W 1X4. Lesbian-feminist political action group.

Lesbians of Colour, Political/social group. Info: c/o Box 7289, Stn A, M5W 1X9.

Lutherans Concerned, c/o Edward Schlauch, 980 Broadview Ave, Apt 2309, M4K 3Y1. Support and fellowship for gay and lesbian Lutherans and their friends. Meets 1st and 3rd Wed of month.

Metamorphosis, Box 5963, Stn A, M5W 1P4. Transsexual counselling and services.

Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto, 730 Bathurst St, M5S 2R4.

536-2848. An ecumenical Christian church for all people with a special ministry to gay community.

New Democratic Party Gay and Lesbian Caucus, Box 792, Stn F, M4Y 2N7. 964-1049.

Notso Amazon Softball League. All-lesbian recreation league. Info: 967-7440 or 466-9341.

Osgoode Gay/Lesbian Caucus, York University, 4700 Keele St, Downsview, M3J 2R5. 532-2443 (Peter) or 463-4721 (Shelley).

Out and Out Club, Box 331, Stn F, M4Y 2L7. 927-0970. Outdoor activities for gay people.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Toronto, 52 Roxaline St, Weston ON M9T 2Y9. Info: Pauline Martin at 244-2105.

Pink Turf Soccer League, c/o Drawer F9, Box 7289, Stn A, M5W 1X9.

Pool Bar League. Info at most bars, or write c/o Toronto Sports Alliance (below).

Queen of Hearts. Organizing group for gay Filipino beauty pageant. Dario, 759-3788, or Alfredo, 461-2800.

Right to Privacy Committee (RTPC), 730 Bathurst St, M5S 2R4. Defence committee for gays arrested under bawdyhouse laws. Cheques or charges payable to: Harriet Sachs in trust for RTPC. Info: 961-8046 or 362-2877. Also runs Courtwatch (362-6928).

Riverdale Curling League. Write c/o Toronto Sports Alliance (below).

Rivervale Volleyball League. Sept-April season. Info at Buddy's bar, or write c/o Toronto Sports Alliance (below).

Rotators Curling League. Write c/o Toronto Sports Alliance (below).

Ryerson Lesbians and Gay Men. For meeting dates call 923-GAYS.

Salukis. All-lesbian softball team. Box 6597, Stn A, M5W 1X4. 964-7477.

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. Discussion group to deal with addiction to impersonal sex. 206 St Clair Ave W, M4V 1R2. Confidentiality assured.

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Drawer OPI, Box 7289, Stn A, M5W 1X9.

Sound Women, c/o Ryerson Women's Centre, SURPI, 380 Victoria St, M5B 1W7. Ryerson women's radio show collective. Lesbian and feminist music, interviews and announcements. Sundays at noon. CKLN-FM 88.1. To place announcements, call 598-9838.

Spouses of Gays, 206 St Clair Ave W, M4V 1R2. 920-5546 (Caryn Miller).

Toronto Area Gays (TAG), Box 6706, Stn A, M5W 1X5. 964-6600. Free peer counselling and info for lesbians and gay men. Mon-Fri, 7 pm-10 pm.

Toronto Counselling Centre for Lesbians and Gays, 105 Carlton St, 4th fl., M5B 1M2. 977-2153. Tues, Wed, Thurs, 6:30-9:30 pm. Professional counselling for lesbians and gay men. Call for appt or drop in.

Toronto Gay Community Council, 105 Carlton St, 4th fl., M5B 1M2. Umbrella organization of lesbian and gay groups. Forum for sharing information and discussing political strategies.

Toronto Historical Bowling Society. Sept-May season; Tues, Wed, Fri and Sat evenings, and Sun afternoon. Also summer league. Info: 423-5955, or write 100-2 Bloor St W, M4W 3E2.

Toronto Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, Box 671, Stn F, M4Y 2N6.

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Box 6597, Stn A, M5W 1X4. Crisis line: 964-8080. Business line: 964-7477. Info, self-defense courses.

Toronto Sports Alliance, Box 1113, Stn F, M4Y 2T8. **Toronto Women's Bookstore**, 73 Harbord St, M5S 1G4. 922-8744.

Tri-Aid Charitable Foundation, 8 Irwin Ave, M4Y 1K9. Gay youth, streetwork, park-watch, public education, agency consultations.

University of Toronto Sex Ed Centre, c/o Office of Admissions, 315 Bloor St W, Rm 107, MSS 1A3. Devonshire & Bloor, behind Admissions Bldg. 978-3977. Sex counsellors for U of T campus. Sponsors gay men's discussion groups. Gay counsellors available Tuesdays on request.

Women's Independent Thought (WITZ). Group for exchange of ideas and creative endeavours. 768-9496 or 536-3162.

Women's Media Alliance, c/o 940 Queen St E, M4M 1J7. Phyllis Waugh, 466-8840.

Womyn Out Doors (WOODS). Women-identified women sharing outdoor skills and experiences. Outings, workshops and trips. Box 462, Stn P, MSS 2S9.

Zami. Support/political/social group for black and West Indian lesbians and gay men, meeting every Thurs, 8 pm, at 519 Church St. Info: c/o Box 7289, Stn A, M5W 1X9.

Windsor

Area code: S19

Lesbian/Gay Community Service Group, Box 7002, N9C 3Y6. 973-4951, Wed-Fri, 8-10 pm (recorded message at other times). Meets monthly at downtown Public Library (downstairs). All other Windsor groups may be contacted through LGCSG.

Lesbian/Gay Students on Campus. Meets irregularly at the University of Windsor.

Lesbian/Gay Youth Group. Meets twice monthly. **Closets** are for Clothes. Weekly radio show, Sundays at noon. CJAM, 91.5 FM.

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TELEPHONE AREA CODES VARY

Brome

The Capables. Support group for bisexual men. Contact through Gay Info in Montreal.

Charlevoix

Area code: 418

Association pour les droits des gais de Charlevoix, CP 724, Clermont, G0T 1C0. 439-2080.

Hull

Area code: 819

Association gaie de l'ouest québécois, CP 1215, succ B, J8X 3X7. 778-1737.

Lennoxville

Area code: 819

Students Against Homophobia, Box 1394, Bishop's University, J1M 2A1.

Montreal

Area code: S14

Affirm/Affirmer, a/s United Theological College, 3521 University, H3A 2A9. Gays in the United Church.

Aide aux transsexuels du Québec, CP 363, succ C, H2J 4K3. 521-9302.

Aime-toi (AA), 6518, rue St-Vallier, H2S 2P7. 524-5821. For gay male drug abusers.

Alternatives, 3440 chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, H2J 1L2. For gay male drug abusers.

Les Archives gaies du Québec, c/o Sortie, Box 232, Stn C, H2L 4K1.

Association communautaire homosexuelle de l'Université de Montréal, pavillon Lionel-Groulx, 3200 Jean-Brillant, local 1267, H3T 1N8. 342-9236 (Jean-Pierre).

Association des pères gais de Montréal, CP 667, Succ N, H2X 3M4. 932-0061.

Association pour les droits des gais du Québec (ADGQ), CP 36, succ C, H2L 4J7. Office: 263 est rue Ste-Catherine. 843-8671.

Association pour les droits des gais du Québec (ADGQ), CP 36, succ C, H2L 4J7. Office: 263 est rue Ste-Catherine. 843-8671.

Association pour les droits des gais du Québec (ADGQ), CP 36, succ C, H2L 4J7. Office: 263 est rue Ste-Catherine. 843-8671.

Association pour les droits des gais du Québec (ADGQ), CP 36, succ C, H2L 4J7. Office: 263 est rue Ste-Catherine. 843-8671.

Atelier de théâtre gay, Cégep Rosemont, 6400 16e Ave, local A-418 (Michel Breton).

The Capables, c/o Gay Info, support group for bisexual men. Meets second Wed of month, 3237, rue St-Antoine.

Collectif d'intervention communautaire auprès des gais (CICAG), CP 29, succ Victoria, H3Z 2V4. 484-2607 (Claude) or 523-8026 (Donald). Sports group.

Live and Let Live, Alcoholics Anonymous group for gay men and women. Tues, 7:30 pm, Rm 210, 5 Weredale Park.

Naches (gay and lesbian Jews), CP 298, succ H, H3G 2K8. 844-0863 or 488-0849. Meets at the Yellow Door, 3625 Aylmer St, Tues at 8 pm.

Parallèles Lesbiennes et Gais, radio programme, Mon 19h30, CIBL-mf, 104.5, 1691 Pie IX, local 402, H1V 2C3, 526-1489, 526-5387.

Parents and Families of Gays, c/o Gay Info. Productions 88, CP 188, succ C, H2L 4K1.

Réunion des associations gaies et lesbiennes à Montréal (RAGLAM), Box 936, Stn H, H3G SM9.

Services communautaires pour lesbiennes et gais du Centre des services sociaux Ville-Marie, 5 Weredale Park, Westmount, H3Z 1Y5. 937-9581 (Joanne Stitt).

Service Jeunesse, for those 25 and under, meets every Sat, 8-10 pm at 263 est, rue Ste-Catherine.

Travesties à Montréal, support for transvestites. c/o Gay Info.

United Church Gays and Lesbians in Québec/Les Gais et Lesbiennes de l'Eglise Unie au Québec, c/o United Theological College, 3521 University St, H3A 2A9. 392-6711.

Vivre Gai(e) (AA), St Jean Anglican Church, 110, est Ste Catherine, H2X 1Z6. 733-0757.

Quebec

Area code: 418

Centre homophile d'aide et de libération, 175 Prince-Édouard, G1R 4M8. 523-4997.

Groupe gai de l'Université Laval, CP 2500, Pavillon Lemieux, Cité universitaire, Ste-Foy, G1K 7P4.

Ligue Mardi-Gai, 529-6973 (Jean Claude Roy).

Sherbrooke

Area code: 819

L'Association pour l'épanouissement de la communauté gaie de l'Estrie, CP 294, J1H SJ1.

Network's listing of publications of special interest to gay men and lesbians will appear in a future issue.

Integrity: Gay Anglicans and their friends, Box 562, Verdun H4G 3E4. 766-9623.

Jeunesse Lambda Youth, c/o The Yellow Door, 3625 rue Aylmer, 2nd fl., H2X 2C3.

Lesbian and Gay Friends of Concordia, c/o CUSA, Concordia University, 1455 boul de Maisonneuve ouest, H3G 1M8. 879-8406. Office: rm 307, 2070 MacKay, open 1-4 pm weekdays. Meetings Thurs at 4 pm in rm H-333-6.

Peru: flexing new muscle

Tourists may still imagine the timeless exoticism of the Andes, but for gay Peruvians, reality is a struggle for democracy and social change in a modern, complex and troubled society.

Scratch most North Americans' image of Peru and the stately soaring peaks of Macchu Picchu are likely to poke through the fog, followed by llamas and chubby red-faced women in bowler hats. Lima, which is home to a full third of the country's twenty million people, is a place on a map but the modern bustling city has not etched itself on the tourist imagination, with its preference for the timeless and exotic.

The *Spartacus* gay guide, while listing 17 Lima bars, four hotels and five baths, tells us that "homosexuality is legal from the age of 18 but not accepted very well.... The tiny gay scene is almost totally in Lima and even that relies heavily on outside cruising... don't expect much."

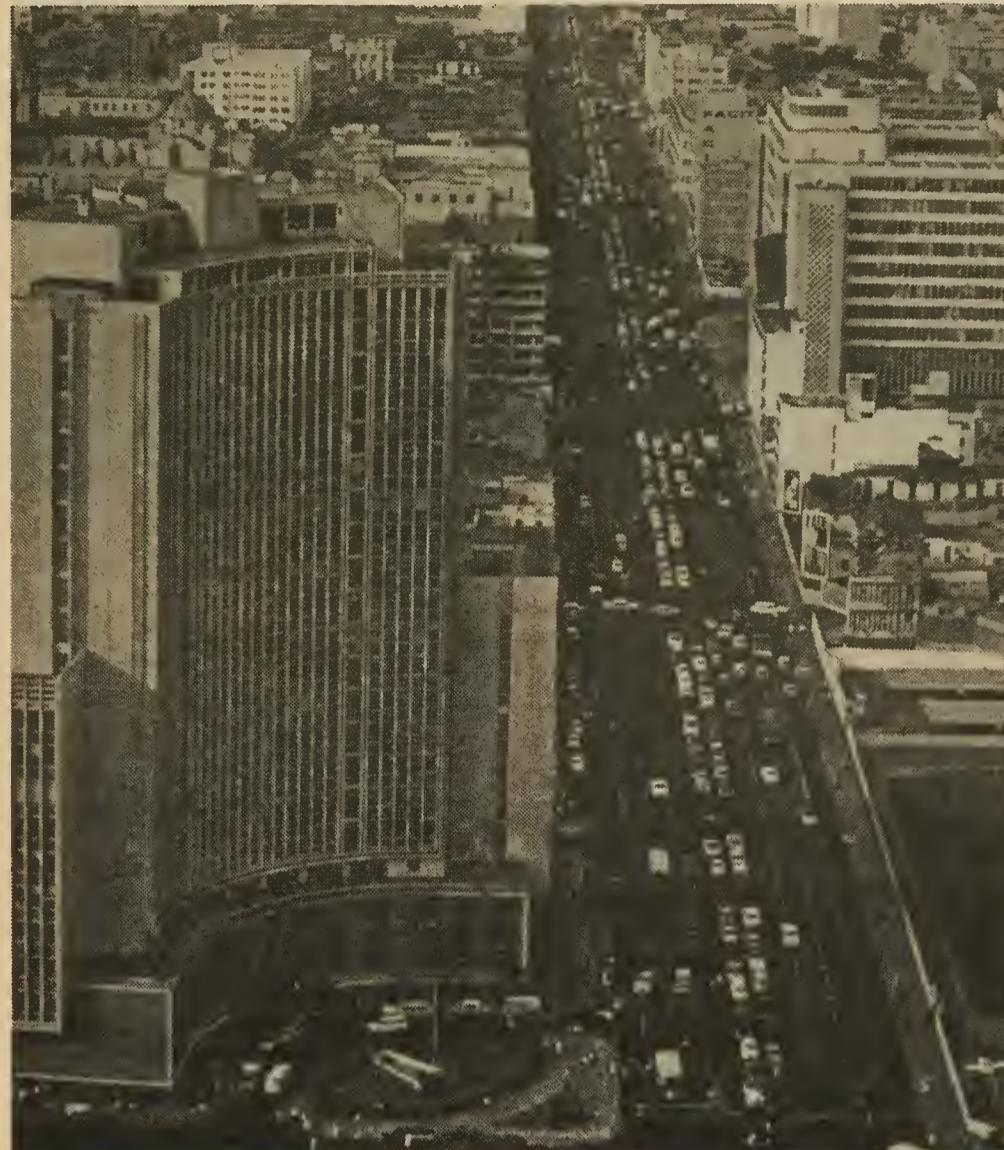
What the travel posters fail to show and the gay guide neglects to mention is that Peru is a country with some of the worst rural and urban poverty in South America. And it is a country where dozens of groups — from Quechua- and Aymara-speaking Indian peasants, to urban slum dwellers, teachers, students, labour and an increasingly vocal women's movement — have been developing and flexing their political muscle over the last decade in a struggle for social change.

Among these groups is the gay liberation movement. A group of young gay artists and intellectuals first began meeting informally in Lima in the late Seventies. "We began to ask ourselves questions, share experiences, problems and friendship," recounts a participant. "We thought of getting other people involved but that didn't start to come together until 1981 when formal study groups and discussions were set up. We focused on our identity and looked a lot at different sexual definitions and classifications. We thought about doing a manifesto for people in general and homosexuals, but nothing came of it."

The following year, 1982, another attempt was being made to set up an organization when police raided El Perseo, a gay disco. More than a hundred people were illegally detained.

The fledgling group, which called itself Movimiento Homosexual de Lima (MHOL), issued a statement of protest. The press picked up on the issue. The police were on the defensive and issued their own press release, charging drug abuse and corruption of minors. MHOL countered with a major publicity coup. The country's largest newspaper, *La Republica*, published a special supplement on homosexuality featuring a discussion of gay liberation, interviews with lesbians and gay men and MHOL's manifesto.

The group then turned its attention to the gay community. The manifesto was distributed in



Bustling Lima: more than Macchu Picchu, llamas and chubby women in bowler hats

meeting places along with a questionnaire to give the group a picture of those who saw themselves as gay. Contacts were also made with lesbian and gay organizations around the world. Things faltered when lesbian members withdrew to take their time in deciding whether their priority should be the gay movement or the women's movement, but by mid 1984 many lesbians had returned. Articles were published in different city papers. A gay sports commission set up volleyball teams, and theatre presentations were organized. Finally, one of the country's four major political blocks, the United Left Coalition, was convinced to include lesbian and gay rights in its platform for last April's presidential elections.

While Peruvian lesbians and gay men look to their brothers and sisters in North America, Europe, and Latin America for support, they are aware that their movement can never be a carbon copy of gay liberation here. For one thing, Peru only returned to civilian government in 1980, after twelve years of military rule.

"In the developed countries, since respect for human and civil rights has been at least partially achieved, the gay movement can concentrate on improving the quality of life," explains a MHOL discussion paper. "In Countries like Peru where democracy is for the most part something that must be fought for and built, the gay movement will acquire different characteristics."

"Peru is a country of deep socioeconomic differences where a minority bases its domination on economic privilege, on ethnic and cultural oppression of the Indian and Mestizo majority, on discrimination against women, and on homophobia. Women have only been able to vote since 1956, people illiterate in Spanish (mostly Quechua and Aymara speaking Indians), only since 1980."

Over the last 30 years, first the peasants, then workers and students and finally teachers, intellectuals, slum dwellers and women have developed many forms of independent organization to defend their rights and overcome the injustices they face. Part of this process, the consolidation of the feminist movement, led to the first demands for sexual freedom and a questioning of sexual roles which laid the groundwork for the gay movement.

"We see ourselves as part of the process of advancing democracy which has made our existence possible," says MHOL. "We see ourselves in solidarity with the feminist movement and with all sectors of the population which face ethnic, cultural and economic discrimination."

Such issues are also important since "the Peruvian homosexual population tends to reproduce the general economic and ethnic segregation which divides the country. We tend to reproduce the machismo and power relations which characterize married life, even if everyone suffers discrimination in the long run."

The candidate of the United Left, the only party to adopt MHOL's suggested gay rights policy, placed second after Alan Garcia of the social democratic party Apray in the April 14 presidential elections.

Garcia assumed the presidency amid rumours of another military coup from the right and increasing pressure from the peasant-based guerrilla army Sendero Luminoso on the far left. Peru owes \$18 billion to international creditors, an estimated 62% of the population suffers from malnutrition and the once thriving middle class is all but disappearing in the economic squeeze.

As in many other Latin American countries, the future of gay liberation in Peru will be tied to the success of forces pushing for general social change and reform in the midst of continent-wide economic and social turmoil. ●

Progress, but bleak prospects

An international AIDS conference gets the bad news; testing remains controversial

More than two thousand scientists, doctors, health workers and educators from 30 countries gathered in Atlanta for an international conference on AIDS in mid-April, and although progress is being made, prospects for prevention and treatment still seem bleak.

Dr Jean Baptiste Brunet of the World Health Organization reported that AIDS has appeared in every major city in the world and in 40 countries on five continents. Cities like Geneva and Paris now have a similar rate of AIDS as Los Angeles (77 per million population). San Francisco now has the highest per capita incidence at 254 cases per million.

Probably the worst news to come from the conference was a study showing AIDS may have

an incubation period as long as 14 years in blood transfusion cases. Although most people infected by the AIDS virus appear not to go on to experience the life-threatening symptoms of full-blown AIDS, they may be more susceptible to cancers and other diseases as they grow older.

Although US Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler predicted a year ago that an AIDS vaccine could be ready in two years, researchers are now saying it could take at least five years if a vaccine is possible at all. Research is underway on more than a half dozen drugs which show promise as treatment but no "magic bullet" appears to be on the horizon. The French drug HPA-23 which many had hoped might be a cure, now shows side effects, and the virus's activity

resumes after treatment is discontinued.

Other research confirmed what was previously suspected: that use of poppers greatly increases the risk of developing full-blown AIDS among those exposed to the virus; that those most likely to develop AIDS are those whose immune system is already weakened by drug abuse, alcohol, smoking or chronic health problems; and that anal intercourse is by far the greatest risk factor in the transmission of the virus. Studies of two small Florida towns with an inexplicably high incidence of AIDS also suggest that under certain

conditions the virus may be transmitted by mosquitoes.

As the conference closed, a US Department of Defense memo ordering civilian blood banks to provide the names of military donors who test positive for the AIDS antibody was leaked to the *Bay Area Reporter* in San Francisco. Although the military claims the information is needed for "medical evaluation and counselling" only, gay leaders fear it may be used for other purposes. "This development makes me very concerned," said Mitch Bart, deputy executive director for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. "The military has a long history of discharging people who are gay. This information could be used in discharges or in courts martial."

The Irwin Memorial Blood Bank in San Francisco has already refused to comply with the order, but the nation's largest blood banks, operated by the Red Cross, have so far made no comment.

Controversy continues over policies for testing for HTLV-3 in the US. While California and Massachusetts have moved to set up testing centres, the Chicago and Philadelphia departments of health have written Secretary Heckler to oppose setting up special test sites away from the nation's blood banks. Alternate test sites had been proposed to meet concerns that high-risk individuals might give blood in order to have themselves tested free, and thereby endanger the blood supply. Chicago health commissioner Lonnie Edwards argued that since the current test is of little use in diagnosing AIDS, it should be used only for blood screening and research. Gay leaders have complained that money needed for research is being diverted to fund testing centres.

While most gay leaders continue to advise people not to take the test, former National Gay Task Force head Bruce Voeller is encouraging testing. Voeller argues that those testing positive may take added precautions that may save lives and reduce risk to others even if a positive test does not necessarily indicate a diagnosis of AIDS.

In Britain the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) is beginning a challenge to the controversial Public Health Act, which provides for the detention in hospital of AIDS patients if, in the wisdom of a magistrate, they are not likely to take proper precautions.

CHE claims the portion of the Act is illegal and plans to raise questions in the House of Commons through sympathetic members. The group is also looking for a case of abuse which they can take to court as a test case. ●

Getting in—finally—at Texas A&M

A gay group wins its nine-year fight to stay on campus

WASHINGTON, DC — Nine years after it first sought official recognition, a gay student group at Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University has had its right to exist on campus upheld by an April 1 action of the US Supreme Court.

Citing a lack of jurisdiction, the Court refused to hear the university's appeal of a previous court decision that the university had violated the First Amendment rights of Gay Student Services. The First Amendment to the American Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and association.

By refusing to hear the appeal, the Supreme Court has avoided setting a precedent for other



Testing at San Francisco blood bank: but what does a positive test mean?

gay rights cases outside the jurisdiction. However, by upholding the decision of the Court of Appeals it has set a precedent for the area of southern Texas. This is encouraging to gay activists in the city of Houston, where a city gay rights ordinance was repealed earlier this year.

The student group must still apply for official recognition from the university. When this is granted, they will be able to meet on campus using free facilities, post and distribute flyers and literature on campus, get advertising discounts in the school paper and sponsor forums on gay issues.

"We're just a little nervous about making some kind of technical mistake now in getting recognition," said Gay Student Services president Marco Roberts. "We don't want to give the university any excuse."

But he also said that, although all the group originally wanted was to put up some flyers on campus, "now that we've been fighting for nine years, we want everything we can get, everything we're entitled to. We expect to be treated like any other student organization. We will exercise every right we have." ●

TRAVELS WITH SANDRA

Holy terror in Australia's tropics

I have just escaped Queensland.

This is the "tropical state" of Australia, where the government pours thousands of dollars into a holy battle against homosexuals—who, officially, don't exist within its palm-fringed borders. Sir Joh Bjelke-Peterson, state premier and head of the gay hysteria division, used to content himself with regular tirades for the media. He had a field day last October when the National Gay and Lesbian conference was held in the capital city of Brisbane.

Several weeks later, two Queensland babies died after contracting AIDS from blood transfusions. That was when really strange things began to happen.

Like the vicious and vindictive letter from the father of one of those babies reprinted on the front of the *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane's leading newspaper. Or locations and photographs of gay escort services making front-page headlines. Pre-determined debates on TV between gay activists and religious leaders, that kind of thing. The stuff that makes one spend hours ranting over the cor-

Book bucks to beat British Customs

North American bookstores plan to help Gay's the Word

LOS ANGELES — A benefit party April 21 at A Different Light Bookstore raised more than \$2,500 for Gay's the Word's defence fund.

Five hundred people gathered to hear American gay writers read from their work at the party, which was one of several events being held in the US to aid England's premiere gay bookstore in its battle with UK Customs.

In Minneapolis, A Brother's Touch is planning a benefit reading by the staff and by contributors to *The James White Review*, and in San Francisco, the Walt Whitman Bookstore is also planning a benefit. Several other gay book shops, including Glad Day Books in Toronto, are to donate a portion of a day's proceeds to help Gay's the Word.

Gay's the Word was raided in April 1984 by

rupture of the media.

What we didn't know was that was the month that someone discovered Anne is a lesbian. Anne was a child-care officer, living in a small town that was too close to Sir Joh's riding. In December, the police—with whom she worked daily—put a tap on her phone. Letters from her lover were opened and read before being resealed and delivered to her. Her small farm was watched and visitors were identified for future reference.

This went on for two months in complete secrecy, until she was confronted one day with the "evidence" against her. Anne was given a week to leave town, and transferred to a "safer" position in Brisbane.

The last time I saw her, she was still too shocked to cry.

Now I can't help comparing the mass hatred of gays as seen in the media with the persecution of one quiet dyke on a farm. Why do politicians scream for our blood, but give no great roar when they make a kill?

And what are they going to do with my name and license number? ●

Sandra J Benson is a Vancouverite currently traveling in Australasia. Her column will appear from time to time.

officers of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, and thousands of dollars' worth of books were seized. Court proceedings will begin June 24, ironically the beginning of Gay Pride Week in London. Legal costs could rise as high as £50,000.

Donations can be sent to: The Campaign to Defend Gay's the Word, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP, England. ●

Lowering the limit in Luxembourg?

The Grand Duchy may decide to leave Belgium behind

LUXEMBOURG — It appears likely that this small country will reduce the age of consent for homosexual acts from 18 years to 14.

The legislation, which would strike down provisions passed in 1971, has been approved during parliament's first reading and sent to State Council, where approval seems likely. The law must be read a second time in the house before finally being passed.

Like many parts of Luxembourg's penal code, the raising of age of consent was passed after Belgium introduced the same legislation for its own populace, fourteen years ago.

A law to reduce the age of consent in Belgium was introduced about two years ago, but has been stalled. It would only reduce the minimum age to 16.

Socialist member of Belgian parliament Luk Van den Bossche, who proposed the age of consent changes in his country, last fall put forward a proposal to outlaw discrimination based on gender, marital status and sexual orientation.

The anti-discrimination measure is not expected to pass quickly, if indeed it ever does (pass). The bill is being opposed by the Christian People's Party, which is also blocking Van den Bossche's age of consent proposal.

According to Christian People's Party senator Tijl Declercq, the anti-discrimination law is unnecessary because, in Belgium, hardly any anti-gay discrimination exists.

"Nowadays, one meets homosexuals everywhere," the senator said.

He also reasoned that an anti-discrimination law would somehow permit the development of pedophilic relationships. ●

Testing the limits of "Tolerance Day"

A Maine school board decides it can't include gay people

MADISON, MAINE — A Madison School Board decision to cancel a high school "Tolerance Day," because the president of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance was scheduled to participate, has been reluctantly upheld by Kennebec County Superior Court Judge Donald Alexander.

Alexander criticized the school board, saying that "instead of gaining understanding and learning tolerance, the students have received a demonstration, by their own school officials, of the extent to which inarticulate fears and intolerance can stifle debate and understanding. When the power of government sides with the voices of intolerance, it is a mighty force indeed...."

However, the judge would not overrule the school board's decision because he was not em-



Not to be tolerated: Dale McCormick of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance

powered to interfere in curriculum matters and no "judicially protectable right" had been violated.

Jed Davis, an attorney for the Maine Civil Liberties Union, claims that Dale McCormick, the gay group's president, was denied equal protection under the law and that her right to free speech was violated, along with those of David Solmitz, the social studies teacher who organized "Tolerance Day," and a female freshman student who joined in filing the suit.

In his judgment, Alexander pointed out that under Maine law "there is no judicially enforceable right not to be discriminated against or excluded from programmes because one is homosexual." ●

Fighting AIDS with informed consent

New Zealand ponders legalized sex at 16 to improve education

WELLINGTON — A bill to legalize homosexual acts between consenting males 16 years of age or older and to include sexual orientation as a ground for complaint of discrimination under the Human Rights Commission Act was introduced into the New Zealand Parliament March 8.

The bill passed first reading by a free "conscience vote" of 51 to 24, and was referred to committee for study and the hearing of public submissions.

Introduced by Wellington Central MP Fran Wilde, the bill meets the basic demands of the gay rights movement, which torpedoed three previous bills as being unacceptable. In 1979 and 1980 bills were opposed principally on the proposed ages of consent, which were 20 and 18 respectively. In 1983, lesbian opposition forced Fran Wilde to drop proposals to introduce an "equality bill," as it would have adversely affected the position of lesbians (who were overlooked when laws forbidding gay sex were originally drawn up). This time, however, the lesbian and gay communities are broadly supportive, although there

are divergent views on some details.

While it is possible that amendments may be moved on the age-of-consent question, an argument finding favour with MPs is that age of consent must be 16 in order to allow a public health campaign against AIDS, and to encourage gays to seek help and advice. At present health authorities are faced with advising people about safe sex for sexual acts which are illegal, while gays seeking help must, by implication, admit they have broken the law. These are factors considered to act against an effective AIDS campaign, in a country which has not yet had any "home grown" cases of AIDS.

In a sensitive and logical speech on the bill's introduction, Fran Wilde refuted each of the major myths about gays, from religious arguments to those about child molestation. Wilde represents perhaps the most liberal electorate in the country, and is unlikely to be harmed by her sponsorship of the bill.

Conservative MP Norman Jones says "legalizing homosexuality would help spread the disease through the schools, the streets and the community." Tory MP Graeme Lee says the acceptance of the bill into parliament was a dark day in the history of the country. Lee and Jones are to join government MP Geoff Braybrooke in a speaking tour to oppose the Bill, while Lee is also threatening to introduce a bill to outlaw lesbian sexual activity.

Gavin Young ●

Saying goodbye to "helpless victims"

Feminists fight back against porn-law stereotypes

CHICAGO — Feminist artists, writers, scholars and activists — including Rita Mae Brown, Kate Millett and Betty Friedan — signed a "friend-of-the-court" brief filed on April 10 on behalf of the Feminist Anti-Censorship Task Force (FACT) in the federal court of appeals.

The brief asks that the Indianapolis anti-porn ordinance adopted last June be declared uncon-

stitutional. It argues that the ordinance, which would allow women who believe they have been harmed by pornography to sue in civil court, infringes on women's rights to self-expression and perpetuates sexist stereotypes about men and women.

"The ordinance perpetuates a stereotype of women as helpless victims," the brief asserts, "incapable of consent and in need of protection; it reinforces the view that good women do not seek and enjoy sex; it makes socially invisible those women who find some of the material covered by the ordinance to be erotic, liberating or educational; and its notion of hair-trigger male susceptibility to violent imagery provides an excuse to avoid directly blaming the men who commit violent acts."

It argues that the terms of the definition of pornography used in the ordinance: "sexually explicit subordination" and "scenarios of degradation," are "sufficiently elastic to include virtually any sexual image of which one disapproves." The ordinance "can as readily be used to curtail feminist speech about sexuality or to target the speech of sexual minorities as to halt hateful speech about women."

Although similar ordinances, based on the work of feminist lawyer Catharine MacKinnon and anti-porn activist Andrea Dworkin, have been proposed in several American cities including Los Angeles, Indianapolis was the only city to actually adopt such legislation. It was subsequently struck down in trial court by federal judge Sarah Evans Barker. It is that decision that is being appealed. ●

SHORT TAKES

Sex-ban bid off ballot

WASHINGTON, DC — Gay activist Leonard Matlovich has withdrawn two initiatives dealing with AIDS that he had submitted to the District of Columbia's Board of Elections and Ethics.

The measures had called for a ban on sex in the city's gay bathhouses and the posting of warning signs in businesses catering to gay men and other risk groups.

Opposition to the initiatives was overwhelming in Washington's gay community. Most felt that, rather than reducing the spread of AIDS, the proposals would lead to an inflammatory election campaign focussed on gay rights. ●

10-year photocopy?

AUSTIN — Anthropologist and sex researcher David Sonenschein, publisher of the pamphlet *How to Have Sex with Kids*, has been found guilty.

Sonenschein: one photo; a long term



ty of a third degree felony for violating a 1979 Texas law prohibiting "sexual performance of a child." He illegally photocopied a photograph of a child in a "pornographic" magazine. Sonenschein plans to appeal the conviction but could be sent to jail for up to ten years. No mention of the notorious pamphlet was made at the three day trial, which focused on his right as a researcher to study pedophilia. ●

Bias out in New Mexico

SANTA FE — New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya signed a comprehensive Executive Order April 1 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual preference by state agencies and departments and those who contract with the state.

Although the order was prepared in October, the Democratic Governor waited until after the state general elections and the end of the legislative session in mid-March to sign.

New Mexico is the fifth state to prohibit discrimination against gay people in state contracts. ●

COMING UP

- National Women's Music Festival. Bloomington, Indiana, May 31 to June 1. For more information, write Box 5217, Bloomington, IN 47402 USA.

- Ninth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews. Washington, DC, June 6-9. Information available from Bet Mishpachah, Box 1410, Washington, DC 20013 USA.

- International Forum of Gay Christian Groups. Antwerp, Belgium, June 7-9. And:

- Commemoration of gay Holocaust victims. Breedonk, Belgium, June 29. For more information about both of these events, write: FWH (the Belgian gay group celebrating its tenth anniversary this year), Dambruggestraat 204, B-2008 Antwerpen, Belgium.

- Seminars for gay activists. Tokyo, Japan, June 16. For details, write the Tokyo Support Group, CPO 1901, Tokyo 100-91, Japan.

- Smashing Borders, Opening Spaces: The International Gay Association Seventh Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada, June 30 to July 7. Write the IGA Conference Committee, 105 Carlton St, 4th fl, Toronto ON M5B 1M2.

- Sex and the State: Their Laws, Our Lives. An international gay history conference to coincide with the IGA's Toronto gathering. For information, write the Canadian Gay Archives, Box 639, Stn A, Toronto ON M5W 1G2.

- Gay Summer University. Marseille, France, July 7-13. For details: UEH, c/o CORPS, 48 rue de Bruys, 13005 Marseille, France.

- The 1985 Convention of Black and White Men Together. Los Angeles, California, July 15-20. "Brotherhood: The Issues, the Challenges: A Focus on Racism." Write: BWMT/LA, 7985 Santa Monica Blvd, N° 109-136, Los Angeles, CA 90046 USA.

World News credits

The Advocate (Los Angeles), *Bay Area Reporter* (San Francisco), *Gay Pied* (Paris), *Gay Community News* (Boston), *Gay News* (London), *HIM Gay Times* (London), *Northern Lambda Nord Communiqué* (Caribou, Maine), *Philadelphia Gay News* (Philadelphia), *The Washington Blade* (Washington, DC), *IGA Bulletin* (Stockholm).

Mapping the gay world

But how much of the real world can you show on a map?

A dissection by Alan O'Connor

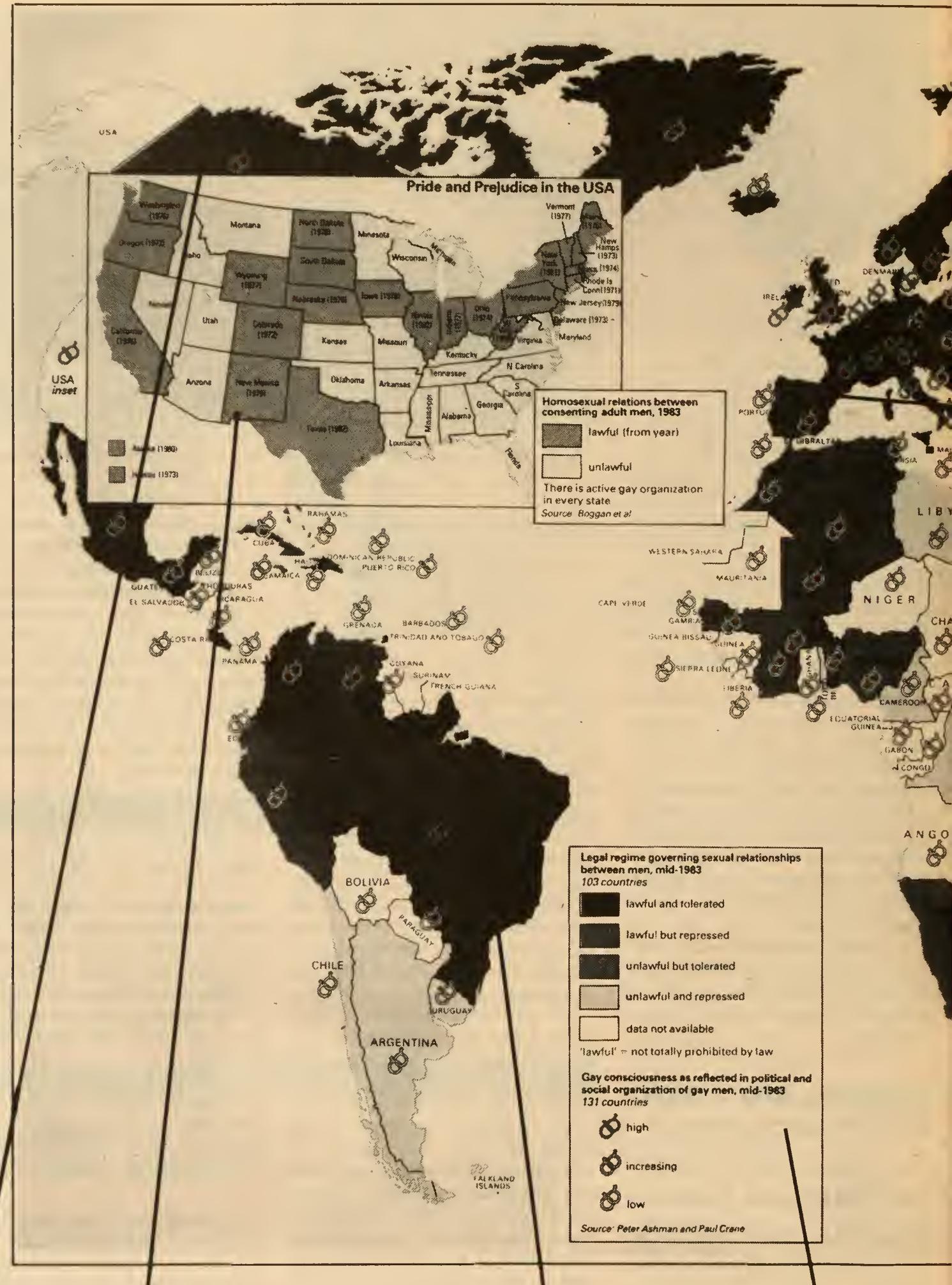
This map, called "Gay Survival, Gay Assertion," is from *The New State of the World Atlas*, a project of the British left-wing Pluto Press in conjunction with Pan Books, published in 1984. The 1981 first edition of the atlas did not have a map about gay rights. An adapted version of this map appears in the International Gay Association's *Pink Book 1985*, and has been reprinted in several gay magazines.

It is impossible to produce an accurate map of a sphere on a flat sheet of paper. This is Winkel's "Tripel" projection, devised in 1913 to give a fair representation of the area of each land mass. We are so used to this image of the world that we look through it, seeking only the "information" that it carries. It's easy to miss the fact that this projection places Europe in the dominant position, top centre, with Chile, Argentina and New Zealand at the bottom left and right edges. We forget that a map of the world could use any point as the centre — and that, in any case, no one has ever actually seen or experienced the real world in this flat, two-dimensional way. Other maps in the atlas make this point more clearly, changing the shapes and sizes of countries to represent not their land mass, but their population, military spending or financial power.

Likewise, it is impossible to produce a map that can tell all the different stories about how we experience gay life.

Canada: Sexual relations between men described as legal but repressed; gay consciousness as high.

Where's Canada? It's tucked in there underneath the United States. Because of that, the map can't show the fact that Quebec, unlike the rest of Canada, provides protection for gay people in its human rights legislation. Similarly, because the map deals with legal sanctions and governmental jurisdictions, it can't show the regional effects of varied cultures, religions or social practices within nation states. The *Pink Book 1985* recognizes this, describing not only the law, but also variations in its enforcement and in social and cultural attitudes toward homosexuality.



The United States: Lawful and unlawful; gay consciousness rated high.

The insert showing the status of homosexual relations between men in each state not only covers up Canada, but gives the US a dominant position on the map. This may reflect the international importance of the gay movement in the USA — what Dennis Altman calls "the Americanization of homosexuality." The "gay consciousness" indicated by the symbols on the map also reflects a predominantly American view of gay life.

"The American passion for categorizing has now managed to create two nonexistent categories — gay and straight. Either you are one or you are the other. But since everyone is a mixture of inclinations, the categories keep breaking down; and when they break down, the irrational takes over. You have to be one or the other."

— Gore Vidal, US historian and novelist,
who lives in Italy

Brazil: Sexual relations between men described as lawful and tolerated; gay consciousness as high.

"In Rio, homosexuals cruise everywhere, unlike in North American cities, where encounters are ritualized and surprisingly difficult outside the ghetto. Men in Rio look at each other continually, apparently with little of the fear of violent rejection that haunts cruising outside in the American ghettos."

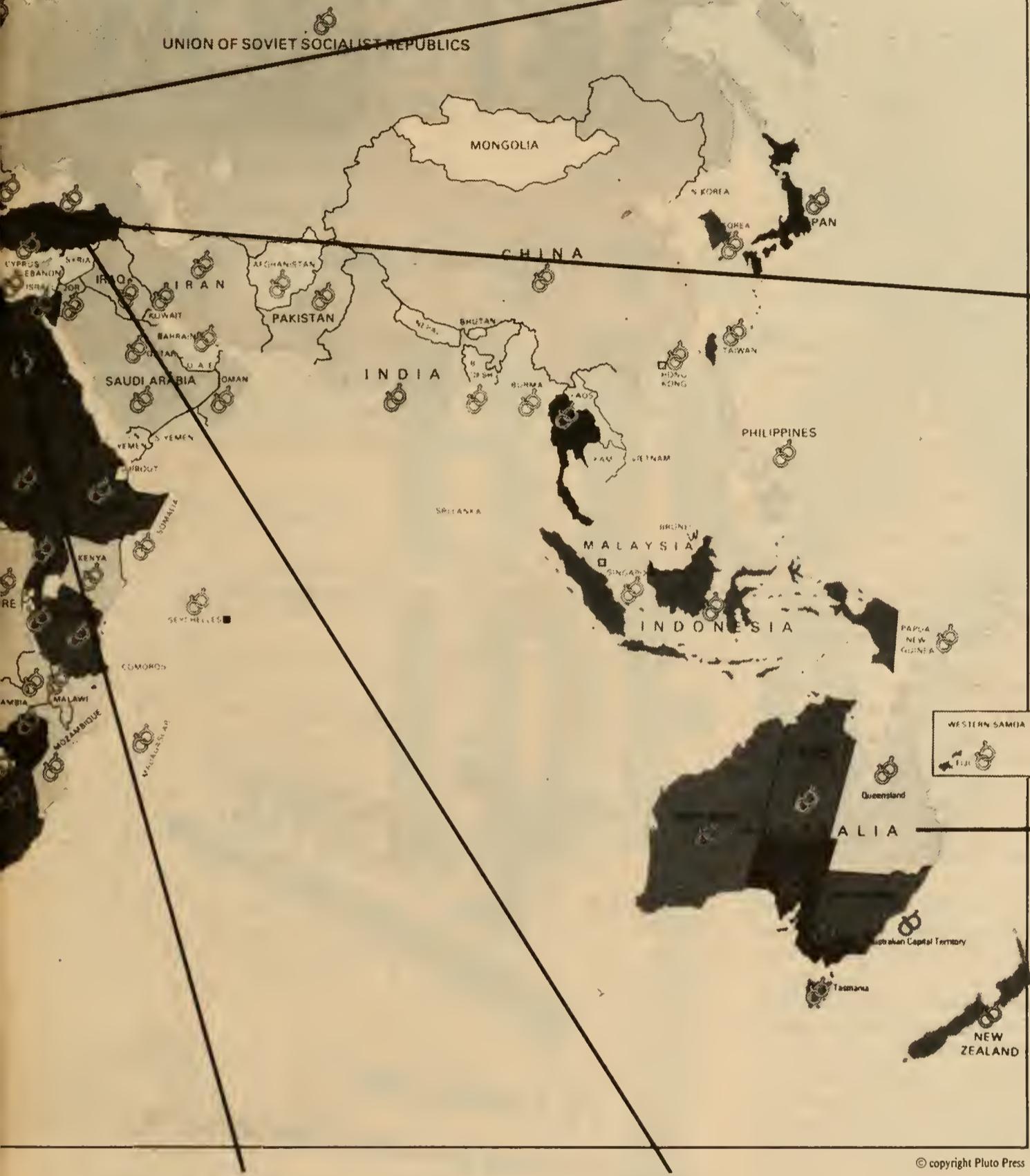
— Dennis Altman, author of *The Homosexualization of America, the Americanization of the Homosexual*, who has written many travel essays for Christopher Street magazine.

The key: Four colours, the pick one of each

This kind of map can give information. Using a scale for the legal and social (between men only), and consciousness, it allows quick to be made at a glance.

It also fixes different histories for the legal and social map is already out of date simplified story, not many ones. What is "true" at one time is, in fact, not given place at any given time.

Entrenched public attitudes, whether enshrined in the law or not, make it physically perilous to be gay in most states, and socially precarious in almost all.



France:

Sexual relations between men described as legal and tolerated; gay consciousness rated high.

"...although there is a concentration of gay bars and restaurants in several areas (of Paris), there is no ghetto here comparable to the West Village or Castro, and gay life is less centred around exclusively homosexual enterprises. (One American woman I know complained bitterly that she could find no lesbians in Paris. The problem was one of recognition: the feminist lesbian who refuses to dress according to conventional standards is very rare in Paris.)"

— Dennis Altman, writing for *Christopher Street*

Spain:

Sexual relations between men described as lawful but repressed, gay consciousness as increasing.

"I was astonished at Mikel's integration into his community. I found myself asking him, 'Was he gay? Is she a lesbian?' The answer was usually no. I began to realize how accustomed I was to neat categories, to a world cleanly divided into gay and straight continents. Not knowing people's sexual orientation was a little disturbing."

"The Basques, in spite of their streak of political radicalism, have always been reputed to be one of the most conservative and traditional of the Spanish minorities. Yet Mikel had managed to come out and to link his personal struggle with the broader struggle of his community, and therefore found himself neither isolated nor exiled to the ghetto."

— Tim McCaskell, in "Out in the Basque Country,"
The Body Politic, August 1980

Australia:

Divergent states of desire

The six states and two territories of Australia divide among them every category available: lawful and tolerated (South Australia, Victoria and the Capital Territory); lawful but repressed (Northern Territory); unlawful but tolerated (Western Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales); and unlawful and repressed (the "Deep North" of Queensland). Gay consciousness is rated as varying from low in the Northern Territory and Tasmania to high in the heavily urbanized southeastern states.

For New South Wales, the map is out of date. In 1983, it became illegal to discriminate against homosexuals here — even though male homosexual acts were still illegal! Sex between men over 18 was decriminalized in May 1984.

Greece:

Male homosexual relations described (as for most Mediterranean countries) as lawful but repressed; gay consciousness increasing

"If you go, today, to Greece or a Mediterranean country, every straight, married man has a boyfriend, and he's not considered queer."

— Vito Russo, best known for *The Celluloid Closet*, his survey of homosexuality in the movies

Turkey:

Homosexual acts between men described as lawful but repressed; gay consciousness as low.

"I grew up and spent my early years in Ankara, Turkey, and took it as a matter of course that some gentlemen would be interested in others. In Turkey one doesn't so often see the female correlate, because women are more apt to engage in such activities or express such affections indoors and away from the sight of men. My family then went back to the United States, where I encountered an overwhelming and powerful negative reaction to the same sort of feelings."

— John Boswell, author of *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, who, because his father was a diplomat, travelled widely in his childhood

The State of the World Atlas by Michael Kidron and Ronald Segal. Pluto Press and Pan Books, London and Sydney (William Collins in Canada), \$17.95.

LETTER FROM
L O N D O N
Dan Healey •

In search of the local local

In the catalogue of great gay destinations, London's claims are modest. She has no reputation for freedom, like Amsterdam; none of the exuberance of Sydney; little of New York's harsh glamour; and none of the electoral muscle we all associate with San Francisco. Modern gay life in London is something of a mystery to most North Americans. If pollsters were to quiz us about gay London or England, they'd probably come up with a potpourri of Boy George, Oscar Wilde and the rose-coloured idyll of *Another Country*.

If you're a gay Londoner, the most difficult thing to ignore at the moment is the media hysteria about AIDS. Every sector of British society has been plumbed for its "story" on the disease and its effects. The firemen's union has announced that its members will no longer give the "kiss of life" (deliciously vivid local talk for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) to apparently gay fire victims. (How are they going to tell you're a pooter as you lay unconscious with the house on fire all around you — search the record collection for Judy Garland albums?) Vicars tell of their fears about administering AIDS-infected communion wine to their flocks. Spike Milligan recently quipped on television that he no longer frequents "hairdressers" — he's too afraid of AIDS. (Thankfully enough London hairdressers reacted to jam ITV's switchboards, but Spike never apologized.) Even the royal family got into the act: brave Prince Charles gave a highly publicized pint of blood as the rate of donations plummetted. Unreasoning fear of the disease has become so widespread that no one wants to give blood anymore.

Of course, England wouldn't be England without the scurrilous tabloids of Fleet Street spreading misinformation and hysteria about everything, including AIDS. These papers are past masters at wringing every last drop of innuendo from a story to produce the most lurid effects. In the vocabulary of the popular press here, AIDS is still an exclusively "gay plague." Even *The Mirror*, tabloid champion of the Labour Party, habitually uses that phrase.

A few thoughtful articles about AIDS have appeared in some of the less infantile newspapers. A few sensitive television programmes have also been produced, and the wave of hysteria is showing signs of abating as other topics become more marketable. AIDS has left its mark on the British gay press, though. Even the silliest gay mags now carry some information, much of it provided by the Terrence Higgins Trust, the chief organization helping those with AIDS in Britain.

If the AIDS crisis has focused more attention on the gay press, it has only served to highlight how truly awful most gay journalism in London is. Since the demise of the old *Gay News* a few years ago, London has not had a gay paper to match the likes of Paris's *Gai Pied* or Boston's *Gay Community News*. It's incredible that London, which produces some of the world's best

(and, admittedly, worst) newspapers, produces so little adequate gay journalism. English poofs are by no means illiterate — they've built two very successful gay publishing houses, Brilliance Books and Gay Men's Press. But the trash that passes for news! Most of the London gay mags will jam their pages with tedious summaries of the exquisite evening had by all at last Monday night's Dallas Lookalike Contest at the Hippodrome, Leicester Square, but they seldom demonstrate any interest in "politics." There are occasional bright lights in the midst of this media darkness, but overall, it's a little scary.

Parallel to this lack of a gay newspaper of record is the complete absence of a gay ghetto in London. The two may not be unrelated. For without a sense of geographic community, perhaps it's difficult to build a sense of intellectual or cultural community. London's gay institutions are scattered all over the map, and in a town where the question of transportation is a source of daily woe, isolation is a very real problem for gay Londoners.

In a sense, London is one of those cities where life is convenient only for the very rich. Thatcherism is hastening the decline of big-city amenities we usually associate with the infrastructure of a great metropolis. Public transport after midnight consists of a minimalist network of nightbuses; English licensing laws make Ontario's seem reckless (pubs shut at 11 pm — a few clubs remain open until 2 am or later, but have to charge a cover); housing is so dear and rare that most people live a long way from the centre of town; shops usually close at six; and I'm convinced the nearest all-night restaurant is in Amsterdam! If your name isn't Queen Elizabeth, you probably don't live downtown, and if you're gay, I'm not even sure you'd want to. Most of the best gay pubs are in the suburbs.

The River Thames divides gay London in two. North of the river you find the fashion-conscious venues, the Boy Georges and the Marilyns, the slavish imitations of American gay styles (501s, Budweiser, "Dynasty Nights"), and the brown-nice brigades with their closety Labour Party badges. South of the river the tone is far less glamorous; more "Bronski Beat"; more fun. The ale is cheaper, cover charges are lower, dance floors larger — and drag is Queen. Almost every South London gay pub has a stage, and the artists range from terrible to terrific. Last week I saw "Rose Marie" at the Prince of Wales in Brixton. This 75-year-old man in a brown polyester twin-set kept me in stitches with his toothless rendition of the disco version of "Je ne regrette rien!"

The gay Londoners I've met appear to have settled into a comfortable relationship with their nearest gay "local." These pubs represent the kind of close-knit community that the great city surrounding them cannot provide. As in small-town Canada, where one bar makes do for all the lesbians and gay men in town, gay locals tend to welcome all, with few restrictions by gender, age, colour or dress. (Of course there are exceptions to this rule. I have never seen a woman, for example, in The Queen's Head, a Chelsea pub for the blistinely smart Sloane Ranger set.) The number of pubs trying to attract a gay following is on the rise, especially in the suburbs. Pub managers are learning that there are "pink pounds" to be made from local gays who don't want to trek into town for a pint.

It's an odd place, this London. Not really much like what I expected when I came here from my native Toronto a year and a half ago. But it is, on the whole, a very likeable city, and one that deserves a better press from that catalogue of great gay destinations. ●

TONY WILSON • BART MONK • ALLAN ST. GERMAIN • ERIC PARKER • DENNICE HALL • JIM SHANNON • ROGER WOOD • BRENT McDougall • JOHN GRUBE • ALEX LIROOS • CLARENCE BARNES • GEORGE SANDERS • CLIVE PYNE • KARL BLINDEHEIM • ANGIE COLOGNI • PAUL PORTELLI • BASIL TUCKER • ARLENE WILKINSON • BETSY CAREY • PHILIP CAIRNS • MATT GOULD • STUART GRAHAM • LEO WOLF • SPENCER • CHARLES FISCH

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David Vereschagin visits
the newest wing of the
1984 Miss General Idea
Pavillion and talks to its

creators in a search for
the spirit, the glamour
and the glory of art.

"We wanted to be famous; we wanted to be glamorous; we wanted to be rich. That is to say, we wanted to be artists.... We knew that if we were famous, if we were glamorous, we could say, we are artists, and we would be. We did and we are. We are famous, glamorous artists."

— General Idea, FILE Magazine, Autumn 1975

IF you've never heard of General Idea, let me assure you that, yes, they are famous, glamorous artists. It doesn't matter if you, in particular, may not know them from Marcel Duchamp. What do soy farmers in Alabama know of Mila Mulroney? It's not who you know, or who knows you, that counts. It's who *they* know and who knows *them*. Consider this: just because you, previously ignorant, have read this paragraph, they are now that much more famous. That much more glamorous. But not a penny richer.

But who are they? Who are "we"?

General Idea are AA Bronson, Jorge Zontal and Felix Partz (aka Michael Tims, Jorge Saia and Ron Gabe, respectively), three artists who met in the psychedelic daze of Toronto in 1968, saw the future, and have looked back ever since.

"Being a trio frees us from the tyranny of the myth of the individual genius. It leaves us free to assimilate, synthesize, and contextualize influences from our immediate cultural environment."

— General Idea, FILE Magazine, Summer 1978

Since their beginnings 17 years ago, doing storefronts in their front window for the edification and mystification of passersby, their ambition and reputation have grown to international proportions. True, they don't hold a candle to Cyndi Lauper, but how many fires does Cyndi light at the Art Gallery of Ontario?

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA!

David Vereschagin: Seventeen years is a long time. What made you decide to keep it up?

AA Bronson: In 1971, we did the Miss General Idea Pageant at the Art Gallery of Ontario. We'd originally thought we'd do one a year, but it was such a gigantic amount of work we knew we wouldn't be able to face one the next year, so we thought we would do our next one in 1984 and any intervening performances would be rehearsals for 1984. And it gave us a goal — that we would stay together until 1984. It was an outrageous idea, especially in the early '70s, when the whole ethos was about **not** setting goals, about going with the flow and that whole tail-end of hippiedom. It was definitely — not politically incorrect — but something incorrect.

Jorge Zontal: Karma.

General Idea has had exhibitions in New York City, Vancouver, Geneva, Montreal, Vienna, Halifax, Brussels, Amsterdam and Kingston. They are currently being celebrated with a retrospective show at the Art Gallery of Ontario entitled *The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion*. This show has already appeared, in somewhat different forms and having somewhat different contents, at the Kunsthalle in Basel, Switzerland and the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. The show will close in Toronto

on June 23, and from there it will move to the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal from September 19 to November 3.

David: Do you think the fact that you're gay has any relevance to your work?

AA: For sure. I think it surfaces in every aspect of our work. But it's an ongoing dialogue, too — Susan Sontag's essay on camp, and is-there-such-a-thing-as-gay-sensitivity, etc. There are all those who say yes, and all those who say nay.

David: But your work would be different if you were straight, supposedly.

Felix Partz: I think it would be. I think that being gay forces you into an outsider position on society, culture, whatever, and that's what you have to deal with. It can be a negative thing, but on the other hand it can be a positive thing.

Jorge: I think it gives nice WASP kids the chance to feel they are outsiders, which they wouldn't get any other way. You know, if you are different to begin with, it's just one more of the things that puts you on the outside. But I'm not sure about the equation between what the work looks like and what it does and being gay. I subscribe more to the theory of oppression — that things like camp and codified signals and white or red handkerchiefs or whatever are common to oppressed folk.

Their work and thought have received intense self-promotion through the pages of *FILE Magazine*. An emptied and refilled version of *LIFE*, *FILE* began its own life in 1972. Through its pages, General Idea have been able to present their idea of their ideas, generally speaking, and to chronicle the glamorous rise of their artistic lives and celebrate those who have had the good sense to congregate around them.

As well as magazine formats, General Idea have played with beauty pageants, fashion, architecture, television and, of course, art, manipulating everything to their own designs, including their audiences. *Going Thru the Motions*, a performance piece staged in 1975 at the Art Gallery of Ontario, rehearsed its audience in appropriate responses — such as standing ovations — in anticipation of the 1984 Miss General Idea Pageant. The audience, by performing, became the performers. Somewhere in between art was both dissolved and created.

David: In a way, you've appropriated cultural forms but you haven't really used them. You could have become television producers or something.

AA: We couldn't have. We produce so slowly, we could never produce at the rate a television producer has to. So much of what we do is bound up in analysis of the forms that we're using. If a TV producer was analyzing the forms of television as he was producing his TV shows, he'd be dead, he couldn't keep going. I think our work involves lots of time for reflection. In a way I shouldn't say this because, god knows, maybe somebody's sitting out there wanting to offer us something and I don't want to turn them off. We'd love to get offers to produce television shows.

Jorge: So we can turn them down.
AA: I don't know. I'd be glad to do a television special.



MISS GENERAL IDEA 1984 is basically this: an idea framing device for arresting attention without throwing away the key.

THE 1984 MISS GENERAL IDEA PAVILLION is basically this: a framing device for accommodation.

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE is basically this: a framing device within which we inhabit the role of the general public, the audience, the media."

— *General Idea, FILE Magazine, Summer 1978*

At the risk of being a party-pooper, I will eliminate the shit before you go ka-ka. General Idea's Framing Devices are basically this:

- General Idea are themselves, being artists.
- The Miss General Idea Pageant is their search for art.
- Miss General Idea 1984 is that art.
- The Miss General Idea Pavilion is the place where that art is presented.
- The Frame of Reference is the audience for the art.

In other words, General Idea are artists trying to create art, creating art, showing art, and having their art seen. And their art scene. And eating it, too.

Do they suddenly seem ordinary? Of course. It's the artifice (the beauty pageant, the pavilions, the drama, the complex language)—that is to say, the culture—that makes them glamorous.

"Glamour replaces Marxism as the single revolutionary statement of the twentieth century."

— *General Idea, FILE Magazine, Autumn 1975*

To extend this logically (which may, in these circumstances, be illogical), if culture is artifice and artifice is glamorous, then the more artificial you get the more glamorous you become. This is General Idea. Working at the highest points of culture by working at the highest points of artifice.

"What is artificiality? We knew in order to be artists and to be glamorous artists we had to be artificial and we were."

— *General Idea, FILE Magazine, Autumn 1975*

AA: The Glamour article, which people constantly refer to, was written at a time when, within the art scene, it was in extremely bad taste to talk about glamour. It was the last subject in the world that anybody would mention. And the same with money and fame. Now, in a way, it's completely reversed. Every young artist coming out of art school assumes that if they're successful they'll be famous, glamorous and rich. In the early '70s that was the last thing in the world they would want. It would have meant the end of their careers, probably, if they were demonstrably any of those things. Although secretly, of course,

they wanted all three.

David: But now that the real world has caught up with you in terms of wanting glamour and fame and money, where does that leave you?

Jorge: Maybe we should write a few TV sitcoms.

AA: Not sitcoms—it's perfect material for *Dynasty*, isn't it?

Take the Miss General Idea Pageant, for instance. Mimi Paige, a close personal friend of the artists, was crowned Miss General Idea 1968—in 1970. The most recent Miss General Idea was selected at the pageant at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1971. His name was Marcel Idea and he reigned for 13 years. It was said that "he captured glamour without falling into it."

What could be more artificial, more superficial and, therefore, more cultured than a beauty pageant? Utter meaninglessness and instant glamour and fame come together in this common North American spectacle which searches, at the same time, for the highest and lowest common denominator. Is this not a definition of art? The search for Miss General Idea is the search for art itself.

Marcel Idea (top right): "He captured glamour without falling into it." P is for Poodle (below): High tech meets low brow.



The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion, originally intended to house the 1984 Miss General Idea Pageant, has opened many wings all over the world. It's "a singular site with multiple points of view." Simply put, the Pavilion is a method of containing whatever ideas General Idea has for it to contain, wherever and whenever they may be. It also burnt to the ground in Kingston, Ontario in 1977. All 1,984 members of the audience managed to escape without injury — luckily, audiences that year had been well rehearsed in gasps of astonishment and panic responses in *Hot Property* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

David: Before the 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion was destroyed, you seemed to be trying to turn the future into myth before it could become history. Now that you're creating unearthed artifacts from the ruins of the Pavilion, you seem to be trying to turn the myth back into history. Do you see yourselves as mythical artists, or as historical artists?

AA: That's nicely put, actually. It's a nice synopsis of it all.

Jorge: I think nothing can escape myth. I don't think there's a contradiction between myth and history. History is so riddled with myth that mythical thoughts permeate every aspect of daily life and scholarly work. So, I'm not sure they're that opposed or that different, eventually.

David: You could say that ours is a culture that seems to be trying to turn history into myths, especially through television and films, where parts of history are constantly being brought back up and recreated. Do you think you're part of that process?

AA: Except that it's the reverse of that process. In our case the history is a fake history, not a real history. It has no basis in reality at all. In a way, that is a perfect example of the way in which we expose those structures, because we are participating but with no source material. It makes it all too clear what that process is.

General Idea have, thoughtfully, classified their own *modus operandi*, in a way that both clarifies and obscures what they are doing:

"General Idea's Framing Devices"

GENERAL IDEA is basically this: a framing device within which we inhabit the role of artist as we see the living legend.

THE 1984 MISS GENERAL IDEA PAGEANT is basically this: a framing device we have framed for our own devices to contain our frame-ups.



David: I heard that the poodle is the most popular dog in Canada.

Felix: But no one will admit it, actually.

"We are the lunatic poodle."

— *General Idea, General Idea 1968-1984, show catalogue, 1984*

"Like Customs agents on the border of acceptance, we smuggle transgressions back into the picture.... Cultural, social, political, sexual, take your pick."

— *General Idea, FILE Magazine, 1979*

Poodles fucking? Is that a transgression? Maybe. Maybe when, as in *Mondo Cane Kama Sutra*, there are three of them going at it in all sorts of different positions. These perverted puppies get a whole room to themselves in the Pavilion, where they may disport and spurt to their endless and endfull doggie delight.

David: It's hard to imagine straight artists

money than with politics or violence. I think we're conscious that we're viewed as a coven of three fags, three gay warlocks messing about with things.

AA: Do you like that image?

Felix: Yes, I love it.

Yet there's a sterility to the fertile activity of these cuddly canines. It's in their perfect positioning, their exact geometric lines, in a word, their style. They are like the images in porn mags: all pose and no action.

But they are exquisite. Their colours burn, they are hot, hot dogs. Their flowing lines are eminently pleasing and tasteful. It's only when you realize what they're doing that a hint of something wrong raises its head (or tail). They are so posed, so beautiful, so aloof, so glamorous. They are not just culture, they are high culture. They are art. But are they good art?

"What do you mean by 'effective' art?

Obviously art that has effect.

Obviously art that affects an audience.

Obviously being effective requires an

David: There seems to be a certain anti-art stance in your art.

Jorge: Oh no, we're very pro-art. I have no patience with people who say that art is not active, that nobody goes to art openings, that nobody cares what you do. It's not true. It's different from a film or a TV show, but you are affecting an audience.

Felix: At the highest level we're critical, and then we also play around with the art structures, but I can't think of anything where we've ever felt we were trying to destroy art or pull the rug out from under it.

Jorge: Art is really a network of myths, that's what it is at this point. So, you're always going to try to question that, affect it or change the configuration of it. I think it's a political duty.

Making up a major part of the current exhibition are the *Archeological Works* and the *Cornucopia: Fragments from the Room of the Unknown Function from the 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion*. Remember that, although this show is the 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion, that very same Pavilion was also destroyed in 1977. On a practical level, this makes a lot of sense. It's so much easier to make bits and pieces of a building than to have to come up with the whole thing.

Since nobody is certain just what the partially completed Pavilion was going to look like before it was destroyed, the possibilities for the creation of artifacts becomes limitless. The remains of various parts of the Pavilion have already been seen — for instance, the ruins of the silver bar were found in Toronto in 1981. Through the Pavilion, General Idea had created a means of making the present part of the future. Now that the future is past, it has to be dug up and brought back into the present.

Jorge: We just like to fuck around with time. We would like to keep time fluid and gelatinous, like a bowl of jelly — not too firm.

1984 never really meant a year — only on the most banal, narrative, literary level.

Since the catastrophe, archeological work has unearthed an astounding variety of fragments and relics, most of which feature poodles. Poodles playing, poodles walking, poodles pissing, poodles fucking.

AA: The poodle is obviously, in a way, the fag hairdresser's dog. It's also that of the prostitute or the lady of leisure or the little old lady with the grey hair or the Florida matron. So many visual clichés are bound up with that particular dog. But one of them is definitely a gay cliché.

Test Tube (top right): Billy takes a taste of Nazi milk. Towards an Audience Vocabulary (above): How to perform a standing ovation.

coming up with something like *Mondo Cane Kama Sutra*.

AA: I think the fact that we're not afraid to be playful works against the traditional male role. You know, the willingness to be silly at times, and without feeling that silliness was meaningless. That's something that I think was very difficult for the art world to accept when we first started out. And it's something now that, to a large extent, they accept more easily.

Also the subject of irony. Irony is obviously a strong ingredient in camp and our work is very ironic. Whether it's camp or not, I'm not sure, but it certainly is ironic. That was also very hard for the art scene to accept in the early '70s. Now irony seems to be a common ingredient in new art forms. I don't know if that has any relationship with being gay or not. You could easily make a case for it being so, but I think it's more complicated than that.

Jorge: I think that when we're being bratty we're usually doing it in some sort of sexual way. We're not being bratty by being too violent or being too outrageous. If we ever want to offend somebody it usually has more to do with sex and maybe

audience.

Obviously art that has effect is art that has an audience.

To win a mass audience does not require art appreciation classes or longer gallery hours or lower prices.... To have effect, art must reposition itself in competition with other mass audiences.

Artists of the world — sell out — sell out before it's too late!

— *General Idea, FILE Magazine, Fall 1977*

Has General Idea sold out? No. No, strangely enough, in spite of splendid opportunities to do so. Why, I'm sure their Magic Cocktail Palette from the Colour Bar Lounge could sell millions if properly marketed. And the mirrored Luxon VB (for venetian blinds), unfortunately not unearthed for the Pavilion, could sell sight-unseen if the eyes could have it. Now there would be effective art! Why are they showing in galleries when they could be entrancing millions, becoming comforts in our own homes?

Could it be they have something else in mind?

David: In your writing you've set up an apolitical tone for yourselves, saying that you're just appropriating available cultural forms and using them to your advantage. Do you see your art as being in any way political or progressive, whatever that may be?

Jorge: I like to think our political thought is progressive, but the work might sometimes go against the grain of our political thought because we want to be bratty again. So even if our political consciousness is completely correct, we still like to play at being incorrect now and then.

AA: Just to question —

Jorge: — the correctness of it.

AA: The smugness one can so easily fall into.



David: Do you think art is of any use politically? Can it help to bring about changes or be an effective critic of, say, social institutions?

AA: For us it's not so direct, we're not doing work that comments directly on any particular situation or organization or government or whatever. What we're involved in is creating a consciousness of culture. We bring up issues, almost on a subliminal level, that alter people's perceptions of culture — I like to think, anyway. I think art tends to work on a much longer timespan than journalism, say.





which is that once an image appears in an art form, it's because it's left reality. It's because it's no longer viable in the real world.

Well, so much for that idea.

But if right and wrong and truth and falsehood and even reality are gone, what's left? What good is a book when all you have left to judge it by is the cover?

"Glamorous objects have been brutally emptied of meaning that parasitic but cultured meaning may be housed there."

— General Idea, FILE Magazine, Autumn 1975



"We wanted to point out the wildly fluctuating interpretations you, our public, impose on us. Under your gaze we become everything from frivolous night-lifers to hard-core post-Marxist theoreticians. We wanted to point out the function of ambiguity in our work, the way in which ambiguity 'flips the meaning in and out of focus,' thus preventing the successful deciphering of the text (both visual and written) except on multiple levels. Curiously, many of you choose only to read one side to any story. Since we give a wide range of choices (and we are conscious of the politics of choice) we are never sure which side you, our readers, will take."

— General Idea, FILE Magazine, Summer 1978

What to do with artists who claim to have no viewpoint on their own art, but acknowledge several points of view? Who, by excluding the possibility of being right, also exclude the possibility of being wrong? Perhaps it involves going beyond issues of right and wrong, correct and incorrect, truths and lies and getting to the nitty-gritty, the reality of things.

AA: By flaunting all those stupid clichés of faggotry, I think there are a lot of people who would say we are reinforcing them. A lot of people feel that our work contributes to incorrect ideas about gayness, or capitalism, or wealth. We would tend to take more of Marshall McLuhan's idea,

The pages of the book aren't blank, they've merely been rewritten. The idea that was once there still floats about it, like the smell of old, yellowed paper, but somehow the plot has changed, the characters are doing unexpected things.

We all meet at General Idea's Colour Bar Lounge, where the objects that have been emptied, that need filling, are not magazines or poodles but ourselves. We have become empty, void of meaning, which must be supplied. Step right up and knock one back. How about some responsible trendiness? Or a nice cool glass of National Socialism? What's in it, you ask? Does it matter? It's something to grab onto, to give your life "meaning." What more do you want? Sure, it's not easy, drinking out of those skinny test tubes — you can't even get your nose into the opening. But then, do you really want to risk getting a whiff of what you're swallowing? Besides, it's so stylish, so now. Why, everyone will be doing it next year. Of course, by then it will be passé.

David: I want to ask you about the relationship between camp and glamour. You say you haven't thought about camp that much, but obviously you've given a lot of thought to glamour.

Jorge: I think the interesting thing is that camp started coming out when glamour was at its lowest ebb, in the late '60s and '70s. Or at least what they called glamour: lots of makeup and the Hollywood romantic lighting, basically. The rise of camp, or self-consciousness about camp, had to do with the destruction of glamour, in a funny way. The only way it was going to be exposed for what it was was that you could laugh at it and put it on, pretend that you liked it, or even like it. You were being bad by liking it. So even if they seem to reinforce each other, camp is really a way to destroy glamour. It's like anti-glamour, even though it pretends not to be.

AA: It seems completely out of our control. We've spun this whole web and now we're caught in the middle of it.

Felix: I think the problem is that we exert too much control over our own work. We participate too much. The marketplace wants an artist they can take, preferably with no bio, never shown before, and make into something.

AA: They'd like to create their own myths. We've created the myth, the dealer can't do it for us.

Felix: And we always want to participate in the exhibitions. Not just be at the opening, but —

AA: — in the promotion of the exhibition and the exhibition —

Felix: — in designing the poster —

AA: — the strategy, the marketing and —

Felix: — meeting the people and what have you. I think —

AA: — the dealer's nightmare:

Felix: — it turns out that it's a liability rather than an asset.

David: So why do you continue to do it?

AA: The work is so often bound up in statements about that whole system that it's impossible for us not to participate.

Felix: We would also feel guilty if we didn't. It's presenting your work and going through the whole system. Not just allowing yourself to be placed in a gallery and then promoted.

AA: We don't want to just be some object that's used and manipulated within the marketplace.

David: Do you want to do the using and the manipulating?

AA: No, but we want to have control over our own presence.

Felix: On the other hand, we would love to be used.

"Head and hand are separate (sic); body and mind are separate. The hand is a mirror for the mind. Wrap your arm around your head, lodging your elbow behind and gripping your

Magic Cocktail Palette (top right): Serving art to the masses. Luxon V.B. (above): Reflections on art and reality.

Also, the basic thing about camp is that you are on the outside, like you're sitting in the dark cinema watching all the glamour being projected on the screen. The only way you can cope with all that information is by shrieking, "Oh! This is so outrageous! Wow!"

I'm very pro-camp, personally. I think it's a really good defence mechanism for dealing with culture. It's a way of digesting that information without being caught up in it.

The thing to remember is that, even though General Idea are critiquing both mass and high culture, they're creating it at the same time. And all that glamour! How to digest that information without being caught up in it?

David: There's a whole mythology around your work that people almost have to have a grasp of before they can understand it. How much of a problem do you think that is?

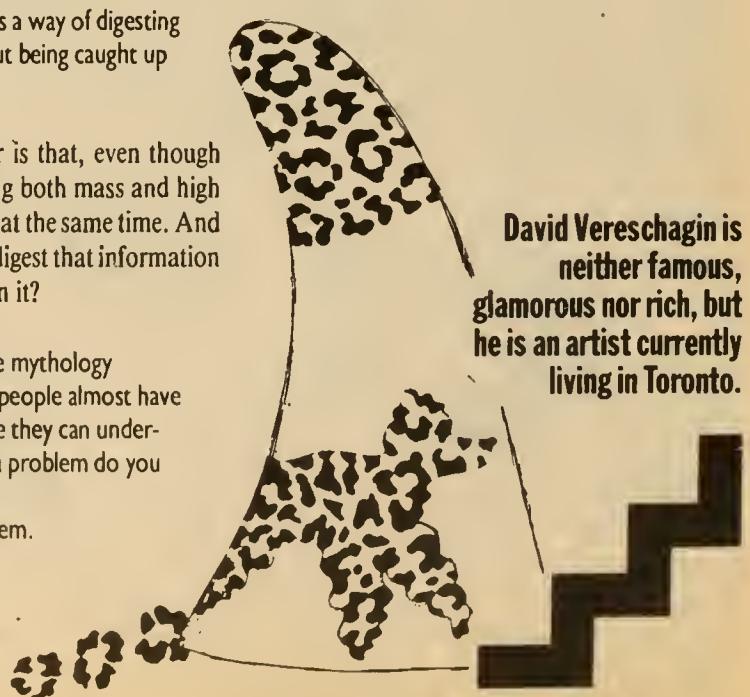
Jorge: A horrible problem.

chin with your hand. The act is now complete. Held, you are holding. Holding, you are held. You are subject and object, context and content, viewed and voyeur."

— General Idea, Manipulating the Self, 1971

Manipulating, you are manipulated. Using, you are used.

Or vice versa. ●



David Vereschagin is neither famous, glamorous nor rich, but he is an artist currently living in Toronto.

Where Virginia Woolf saw greatness of soul, others seem to find "a dark sadistic province"

Variations on Vita

Vita: The Life of Vita Sackville-West by Victoria Glendinning. Knopf (Random House of Canada), 1984. \$23.95. Penguin, \$9.95 (pbk).

Catherine Bennett •

Well. It's massive and impressive. It's sober and humorous. It respects its subject. It's literary, scholarly and very, very readable. In chronicling the life of Vita Sackville-West, Edwardian novelist, poet and lover of women, Victoria Glendinning has produced the most welcome biography of a famous lesbian to come along in quite a while.

I might also say, while I'm at it, that it provides one of the year's best opportunities for literary voyeurism. The book is not in the least gossipy; Glendinning struggles — successfully — to give equal weight to Vita's careers as writer, gardener and female Don Juan, though the last of these could easily have taken precedence. But for the unscrupulous reader (go on! admit it!) this book, based on letters, private journals and poems not intended for publication, is almost all you could ask for. At the very least it will confirm a few suspicions and tell you some things you never knew before. And when all's said and done, what's a biography for?

To speak of Vita Sackville-West, one must speak of her unorthodox marriage to writer and diplomat Harold Nicolson — a man as attracted to other men as Vita was to other women. By necessity Vita covers much of the material which was the focus of the earlier *Portrait of a Marriage*, by their son Nigel Nicolson. But Glendinning's perspective is different, and while she acknowledges the success of the Nicolsons' open marriage and cites their trust and understanding of each other's needs, she proves to be a more resistant reader than Nigel Nicolson when dealing with their letters and diaries. Harold, in particular, is seen to have had "a misleading way of writing about himself... that was humorously self-deprecating." He had no great liking for women, seeing Vita as an exception, and certain of his letters reveal a blatant chauvinism that makes clear the harsh side of his character. Vita, for her part, is shown to have despised marriage, and to have found it bearable only because of the understanding she and Harold had for one another.

Vita's love affairs are dealt with objectively and unsentimentally, but Glendinning balances this by presenting excerpts of passionate letters from Sackville-West's lovers. The emerging picture of Vita is that of a fascinating, dangerous and not always likeable person. Her affairs began quickly and were always intense. She expected a sort of commitment and fidelity from her lovers which she did not — and perhaps could not — return. To the women she loved, she often seemed detached; beyond a certain point, they could come no closer to her. Evelyn Irons (though it could have been any of Vita's lovers) wrote that, for Vita, she was "a joke or a diversion. I am not part of your life at all. Not that I feel I am not damned lucky to have any share in you, however small...." Part of the reason for the feeling of distance was the secrecy Vita imposed on all her affairs, despite her own open marriage, forcing both her lovers and herself into deception. Glen-



Vita Sackville-West: craving "two incompatible states of being: peace and passion"

dining suggests that for Vita "secrecy was of the essence. She would always want to keep her 'world of romance' away from the outside world and apart from her life with Harold.... Vita was infinitely secretive and devious, though she believed herself to be candid."

Her celebrated affair with Violet Trefusis, with whom Vita ran away to France in 1918, appears to get short shrift here but, as Glendinning points out, Vita gave her own account of that in an autobiographical manuscript which Nigel Nicolson published in *Portrait of a Marriage*. Glendinning's aim, once again, is to provide a more distanced view, unclouded by love or involvement. "Memory, especially of love, distorts and selects," she says, and suggests that in Vita's own account her happiness with Violet was somewhat overblown. She cites a passage from Vita's diary of that time: "Hate life — hate Paris — wish I were dead." She also makes clear that although Vita and Violet expressed contempt for convention and adopted the role of rebels, their courage failed when faced with the prospect of genuine ostracism. Both women were raised as members of the privileged classes — Violet the daughter of a mistress of King Edward VII; Vita the only child of the Third Baron Sackville, brought up at Knole, the huge ancestral estate which, had she been a man, she would have inherited. The idea of forfeiting such privilege once and for all was terrifying. Glendinning does not speculate on what the future might have been for Vita and Violet had they remained together. Yet twenty years after the end of the affair, Violet still remained menacingly attractive. Vita was afraid to see her because, she wrote, "We simply couldn't have this nice, simple, naif, childish connexion with

out it turning into a passionate love affair again."

Vita's "dual personality" is clearly drawn, one side expressing dominance, aggression and cruelty, the other — the domestic side — containing the aristocratic lady, the mother and the wife. To the end of her life, Vita simultaneously craved two incompatible states of being: peace and passion. Vita's lovers often found her tenderness changing to dominance, exposing a covert sadism which frightened and compelled Vita herself. In a poem to Mary Campbell, wife of the poet Roy Campbell, she wrote at the height of their affair:

And shall you, gliding in your silken shirt,
Deny the hidden bruises of your flesh,
Nor boast the livid honour of your hurt?
Come, if they fade, I'll brand you deep afresh.

The conflicts in Vita's personality caused her much unhappiness, but Glendinning observes that "In Vita's potential for ruthlessness, criminal carelessness and self-abandon may have lain her only chance of testing what genius she had."

Genius was something which Vita, in her career as a writer, never realized. Virginia Woolf, whom Vita met in 1922, later fell in love with and continued to see until Virginia's suicide in 1941, commented that Sackville-West wrote "with complete competency and a pen of brass." Glendinning concedes that Vita produced "some good books and some good poems," but her poetry was neither innovative nor linguistically exciting; her novels (which Glendinning synopsizes) tended toward melodrama. Vita disowned most of her novels and hated to be reminded of them; she was never secure in her abilities as a poet, and later in life when her work was snubbed she was shattered.

Ironically, though Vita's ambition was to be a great poet, her most significant achievements were as a gardener. Glendinning comments that Vita's "one magnificent act of creation" was Sissinghurst, her country estate, the garden of which she conceived and laboured over for years until it achieved perfection. Her articles on gardening were, "whether she liked it or not, to make her more widely known and more eagerly read than anything else she ever wrote."

Sissinghurst gave Vita pleasure to the end of her life, and there, from about the age of forty on, she adopted a rather bizarre mode of dress that also expressed her duality — the masculine mixed with the aristocratic lady: "...whipcord breeches, hight boots with laced canvas uppers made to her own design... a rough jacket or jerkin over a blouse — and her pearls and dangling earrings." She feared that people found her appearance eccentric, but did little to alter it. Surprisingly, she grew more and more conservative, deplored the English welfare state and nervous about her eldest son Ben's anti-establishment views. Though Vita continued to fall in love, she came to value most the few "indestructible" relationships she had achieved, above all her closeness with Harold. Plagued with poor health and believing herself a failure as a writer, she developed an insidious alcoholism which she was never able to come to grips with. Increasingly, she retreated to her room in the tower at Sissinghurst, and there, in June 1962, she died.

This portrait of an exhausted, severely depressed and defeated woman differs sharply from the indomitable Vita hitherto painted by critics and biographers. Glendinning presents it compassionately, but does not lose hold of her objectivity. As a narrator she remains invisible, letting the story of Vita's life tell itself, and resisting that temptation of all biographers: intrusiveness. In her preface she announces a refusal to indulge in amateur psychiatry, and she sticks by this. Where motives for Vita's actions are suggested, it is with the intention of provoking thought. Her commentary on Vita's life reads like a considered, learned (and often lively) appreciation of the facts and documents.

This is a book with few flaws. One of these, however, is Glendinning's failure to go far enough in her discussion of lesbianism. Indeed, the word "lesbian" is almost never used, which is odd considering Vita's life. We are told that she never had any desire to "come out" about her "love for women" (as Glendinning puts it), and the scandal such an action would have caused in London society is intimated. Nor does Glendinning suggest, as she might have, that Vita's growing isolation in middle and old age could have had something to do with the absence of lesbians among not only her friends, but among her lovers, who were most often bisexual or basically heterosexual, and often married. Glendinning's use of the words "masculine" and "feminine" — words that are easy (perhaps too easy) to use in conjunction with Vita, becomes irritating at times, and of little currency when discussing a person who believed "the sexes would become more nearly merged on account of their increas-

ing resemblances." At other times these terms bring relief, simplifying the intricacies of Vita's personality. The comfort of labels is dangerous, but seductive.

These failings don't seriously mar the book. It remains a work of remarkable skill—though one less multi-dimensional and complex than its subject: Vita herself. ●

Catherine Bennett lives and writes in Toronto.

A correspondent of "a nice, kind nature"

The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf. Edited by Mitchell Leaska. William Morrow & Company, 1985. \$25.50

Mary Meigs ●

Vita Sackville-West's letters to Virginia Woolf are published here for the first time; Virginia's to Vita can be read in her collected letters, in six volumes which came out between 1975 and 1980. Both were supremely gifted letter-writers, and Vita's letters are a joy to read as she ranges over her world with her alert senses, her humour and tenderness. This volume documents (with some of Virginia's replies) the love between the two writers, which went through a stage of flirtation (provocative letters that generated declarations of love), a short period of passion and a steadfast commitment to each other which lasted until Virginia's death.

Since I've fallen in love with Vita Sackville-West while reading her letters, I was pained to read Mitchell Leaska's introduction, in which he labours to define "the thrust of Virginia's emotional alignment to Vita," and to explain the "otherwise unexplained roles of dominance and compliance that both women acted out in their lives in the guise of parent and child, healer and patient, and metaphorically, perhaps even victor and victim." Leaska tells us that Virginia assumed a submissive role because she recognized "a dark sadistic province" in Vita's "emotional terrain," and he gathers momentum for his presentation of Vita in her relations with Virginia: "her sense of domination"; "her sense of power"; "the deep vein of aggression that ran through Vita's nature." He even downplays Vita's feeling for Virginia: "her bounty, her protection, her passion—these were not love, exactly, but they were the only generous expedients she could offer in its place."

To confuse matters, Leaska contradicts his portrait of Vita as a power-hungry, aggressive, self-deceiving, determinedly masculinized woman whose thirst for fame "was the hidden key" by quoting phrases from Virginia's letters and diaries which show an entirely different Vita. "The truth is that she is an extremely nice, kind nature," says Virginia in a letter to her husband Leonard. And apropos of Vita's "thirst for fame," Virginia says in her diary, "She says she gets more pain than pleasure from praise of her books, which I believe to be true. Never was there a more modest writer."

Perhaps Vita was ambitious (a crime in a woman, as we all know), but there was never a writer who accepted criticism more humbly, with a more evident desire to test it for truth. Who but Vita could have taken so to heart Virginia's words about her poem, *The Land*: "I imagine it wants a little central transparency... some sudden intensity." Vita agreed with touching humility. "It is



Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, 1932

"If Vita had a conquering side in her relations with other women, with Virginia she was kind, forbearing, humble and funny."

the thing which spoils me as a writer; destroys me as a poet." In the relation between the two writers, it was Virginia who held the power but used it tactfully; Vita's work had qualities that Virginia admired and praised. Her great virtues were her "invincible modesty," as Virginia called it, and the honesty which enabled her to become the unsentimental chronicler of the aristocracy which had shaped her without deforming her. I was astonished when I read *The Edwardians* recently, to find that it is a masterpiece of wit and irony which shows, just as her wonderful letters about life as a diplomat's wife show, that she saw through all the splendours of aristocratic life and could describe it with a remarkable sharpness of vision.

Vita's greatness of soul, combined with her physical beauty, made her irresistible to Virginia. "Her beauty," says her son Nigel Nicolson in his introduction to Volume III of Virginia's letters, "was dark and lustrous, ripe as a fig; tall and graceful, the two elements of her nature, feminine and masculine, combined into an appearance which was both ravishing and strong." Nicolson, thank goodness, unlike Leaska, seems to think it natural for feminine and masculine elements to combine. Vita, according to Leaska, "fearful that it might put her in deadly combat with her mother for male favour... suppressed her feminine side and... granted ascendancy to masculine behaviour, male pursuits, and boyish mannerisms." Another of Vita's strategies for domination, we are supposed to think.

If Vita had a conquering side in her relations with other women, with Virginia she was kind, forbearing, humble and funny. Inevitably they had disagreements from time to time and hurt each other in unintended ways; this happens between loving friends and is a peculiarity of exchanges of letters as opposed to face-to-face conversations. It is part of the flirtatious excitement of letter-writing between lovers. Virginia, writing to Vita at the British legation in Teheran in 1927, says, "Yes, I want you more and more. You'll like to think me unhappy I know," and contin-

ues, "Morgan (E M Forster) says... one spends 3 hours on food, 3 on sleep, 4 on work, 2 on love. Lytton (Strachey) says 10 on love. I say the whole day on love.... But you've never been in love, they say." And Vita replies: "I always get devastated when I hear from you. God, I do love you. You say I use no endearments. That strikes me as funny. When I wake in the Persian dawn, and say to myself 'Virginia... Virginia.'"

In my imagination I see Virginia as a Saluki, one of those infinitely graceful and fine-boned dogs of ancient lineage, bounding around a fully caparisoned Arab mare. Vita was literally saddled by her aristocratic heritage; she was broken in to accept its traditions, yet her indomitable eyes flashed fire. Part of Virginia's fascination with her grew from Vita's place in the history of England, her ability to play her role as daughter of the Sackvilles and mistress of Knole, until the ancestral home passed out of her hands on her father's death. But a deeper bond was forged in their sensitivity to each other as writers. In May 1927 Vita wrote Virginia, after reading *To the Lighthouse*, "I am dazzled and bewitched. Why did you say anything so silly as that I shouldn't like it? You can never have meant that though.... Darling it makes me afraid of you. Afraid of your penetration and loveliness and genius." And of *Orlando*, Virginia's 1928 biographical fantasy of a young aristocrat who moves through English history from the 16th to the 19th centuries, changing sex along the way—a character frankly based on Vita—she says, "It seems to me the loveliest, wisest, richest book that I have ever read...." The end of this letter made me laugh out loud: "Also, you have invented a new form of Narcissism,—I confess,—I am in love with Orlando—this is a complication I had not foreseen."

So is the reader in love with Orlando/Vita, and with Virginia, too; a benign triangle, one might call it. And one is in love with their vulnerability and their mutual anxieties which are part of the love-dialogue: Virginia's fear that Vita will not like *To the Lighthouse*; Vita's fear that Virginia, even after her ecstatic praise of *Orlando*, will think her "too confused and illiterate for anything"; and the evidence in Virginia's reply that she had been afraid that Vita would be "hurt or angry." "What an immense relief!" she says. There is in their letters a pattern of anxiety and relief; Vita anticipates what she thinks will be Virginia's negative response to her work by running it down in advance, even though Virginia, except for her remarks about "central transparency," has been encouraging and even enthusiastic. It seems to be characteristic of writers—and is perhaps a woman writer's instinctive defence—to prepare for the worst by saying, "You won't like it," a much safer procedure than saying "You'll love it." In the case of Virginia and Vita it showed that each admired the work of the other enough to care deeply what she thought. Fortunately, they were so different as writers that there was none of the sense of rivalry Virginia had felt, for instance, with Katherine Mansfield, whose work was among the first published by Virginia and Leonard's Hogarth Press. Vita was dazzled by Virginia's genius, and Virginia respected Vita's competence and her prolific brain. "You have a rich, dusky attic of a mind," she told Vita.

Only on one occasion did a book precipitate a quarrel. The book was Virginia's *Three Guineas*, in which she, more clearly than any other woman of her time, had perceived the link between the patriarchy and war, between fascism and the oppression of women, and had wanted to declare the independence of women from the state. For once, Vita was blind, not to the virtues of Virginia's writing but to her argument. The conservative aristocrat came into conflict with the radical feminist. Writing on the eve of World War II, Vir-

ginia had challenged the idea of patriotism, but love of country was part of Vita's life-blood. And like many successful women today who have prospered under the patriarchy, she had a certain disdain for feminism. She wrote Virginia a hurried, rather careless letter, alternating praise and sharpness ("at one moment you enchant with your lovely prose and the next moment exasperate one with your misleading arguments"), and Virginia, stung to the quick, replied even more sharply. Then followed a letter in which Vita explained, defended her point of view and apologized for having hurt Virginia—all without the pride or rancour that Virginia's words ("and then you sickled me over with praise of charm and wit") might have brought out in someone less generous-hearted. "Your very contrite and entirely devoted V." she signed her letter, and Virginia replied with her own apology. She, too, had written carelessly, she said, "So forgive and forget." On the basis of this letter, Leaska appears to think that Virginia was—again—submissive. "Virginia could continue to remain compliant," he says. But what Leaska calls compliance I call non-violence and mutual sensitivity.

Vita and Virginia continued to write each other until March, 1941, the month when Virginia took her own life. Vita was a member of the home guard and was driving an ambulance; bombs had destroyed the Woolf's home in London. Virginia (30 August 1940): "And there you sit with the bombs falling around you. What can one say—except that I love you—You have given me such happiness." Vita (10 October 1940): "Darling—thank you for my happy hours with you. You mean more to me than you will ever know."

Long after Virginia's death, Vita wrote to Harold Nicolson: "I still think that I might have saved her if only I had been there and had known the state of mind she was getting into." "She was probably right," says Leaska—a strange, slightly ambiguous tribute. But an acknowledgement that *only* Vita, not Leonard, not her sister Vanessa, could have saved Virginia—with her tender good sense and her ability to reach Virginia when others failed. "Donkey West knows she has broken down more ramparts than anyone," said Virginia in a 1926 letter. I like to think that their love eclipsed the sweet security and mutual aid of their marriages, and soared above them like a multi-coloured balloon—but each reader of the letters will have to decide this for herself. ●

Mary Meigs is the author of *Lily Briscoe: A Self-portrait*, and *The Medusa Head*.

Tough buzzard with a serpent's tongue

Conversations with Capote, by Lawrence Grobel. New American Library, \$18.95.

Michael Totzke ●

C apote. A beautiful faun in the photograph on the back cover of his first novel, published when he was 24.

A writer of cool, strong prose. *The Muses are Heard. Breakfast at Tiffany's. Music for Chameleons.*

An innovator, whose chilling *In Cold Blood* ushered in a new literary form—the non-fiction novel.

A court jester, hobnobbing with Jackie and Warhol and Liz, feuding with Mailer and Vidal.

A tiny terror with an absurd squeak of a voice, being outrageous on *The Tonight Show*.

An up-front, no-bones-about-it homosexual. A thorny old man, sometimes malicious, uncompromising and unforgiving. But a kind and loyal friend.

And always the relentless, self-critical artist, honing his art.

"He is the most perfect writer of my generation," Norman Mailer wrote in *Advertisements for Myself*. "He writes the best sentences word for word, rhythm upon rhythm."

Lawrence Grobel's book, culled from conversations with Capote between July 1982 and August 1984 when he died, is a welcome addition to the Capote Legacy. Grobel first encountered his subject when he did a short interview with him for *Playboy* cable TV, and continued to meet with him for a future project.

"I didn't have anything in mind then," writes Grobel, "other than the thought that I was recording history and that he was a wonderfully entertaining talker."

Grobel — who remains a shadow; we never learn whether he's gay or straight — passes the ball and Capote runs with it. Capote is candid, illuminating and touching. Also nasty and shocking and — most decidedly — funny. I laughed out loud more than once; the man has a deliciously wicked tongue.

The list of people Capote knew is astounding. Try these on for size. Marilyn Monroe, Andre Gide, Colette, Cocteau, Garbo and Christopher Isherwood. Tennessee Williams, Charles Manson, Willa Cather and Montgomery Clift. Jack and Robert Kennedy and their killers, Lee Harvey Oswald and Sirhan Sirhan. And many more. Some are treated kindly; some get a thorough lashing of that razor-sharp tongue.

Here are some treasures.

On that notorious photograph on the back of *Other Voices, Other Rooms*: "It's just me lying on a sofa looking at the camera. But I guess it assumes that I'm more or less beckoning somebody



photo: Jill Krementz

Truman Capote: "Just out there flapping away, looking for something to eat"

to climb on top of me."

On writing: "It's a very excruciating life, facing that blank piece of paper every day and having to reach up somewhere into the clouds and bring something down out of them."

On Gertrude Stein: "I like her book about Alice. But for the rest of Gertrude... 'I am a pot of shit, I am a pot of shit, I am a pot of shit....'" (Laughs.)

On the rich: "The real difference between rich people and regular people is that the rich serve such marvelous vegetables. Delicious little tiny vegetables. Little fresh-born things, scarcely out of the earth. Little baby corn, little baby peas, little lambs that have been ripped out of their mothers' wombs."

On what he'd like to be reincarnated as: "A buzzard.... Because buzzards are nice and free. Nobody likes them. Nobody cares what they do. You don't have to worry about your friends or your enemies. You're just out there, flapping away, having a good time, looking for something to eat."

Conversations with Capote does what a good book of its kind does — sends you back, richer, to the artist's work. That richness is a knowledge of the flesh-and-blood man behind the art. And in this case, the man is a tough old nut, devil and angel, sage and clown. I like him enormously. ●

Michael Totzke writes news articles regularly for The Body Politic

married Chester's father, thus becoming privy to family lore and scandal.

Chester was robbed of his paycheque three weeks in a row by the same sailor! That kind of shaming detail about him is unsparingly provided. What is missing from this portrait is the poet whose life-long disappointment it was to be denied an independent reputation, despite his three published books of verse, despite Auden's going so far as to review one of them himself in a not overscrupulous bid to bring his chum some critical attention. (On his own, Chester wrote a libretto for Carlos Chavez. Is it ever performed? What was its fate? Even to know what it was about would be welcome.) In the end it was as an adjunct, as W H Auden's collaborator — a perquisite offered him often only at Auden's insistence — that he won a reflected distinction. If that was an injustice, it is cruelly compounded by a biographer who has failed to put on the scales a body of work — from a poet Auden treated as his literary equal — which might excuse, or at the very least complement, the sorry life she so mercilessly exposes.

For Auden's life up to the time she met him, Farnan turns to published sources, which she generally acknowledges, and here her limitations as a chronicler are out in the open. Dealing with material already known to us, she reveals her inability to get things right, her instinct for missing the point each time.

Concerning Auden's early publishing history, Ms Farnan records, accurately enough, that in early 1930 "Faber & Faber accepted some of his poems for publication," then adds: "Wystan had now gained the attention of T S Eliot, a director of Faber & Faber." But other biographers have told us that Auden's first submission to Faber & Faber, three years earlier, had been rejected (for us, probably even more interesting than an acceptance) with an accompanying letter from Eliot, then a mere "reader of poetry" for the firm — and that it was the stimulus provided by the great man's assurance of interest that led Auden to produce the revised collection eventually published. Not quite the Farnan sequence of events!

Examples of errors and omissions in this latest contribution to Audeniana are too lengthy and numerous to cite here (just check this version of the Dorothy Day incident against Humphrey Carpenter's in *W H Auden: A Biography* — against the *New York Times*, for that matter; or the Iceland junket, her wildest distortion, against Charles Osborne's account of it in *W H Auden: The Life of a Poet*; compare generally Farnan's peevish subject with the considerate man warmly depicted in Charles H Miller's *Auden: An American Friendship*).

If she can do this with material that is already on record, what can she do with material that is beyond verification? — and Ms Farnan introduces into her story, on top of her own unsubstantiated revelations, twenty-odd characters identified by the note "not his real name"; a dozen of these pseudonymous, even anonymous, informants are directly quoted! Some of them supply a quantity of vital but dubitable detail. (At least one, I can vouch, has maligned Auden contemptibly, besides getting the pertinent date wrong.) With these as its authority, and with the writer's exhibited untrustworthiness, her airing of prim-but-prurient confidences cannot be received as superior to gossip.

Several times in her book, Dorothy J Farnan comes close to admitting that the poet may not have liked her very much. *Auden in Love* could easily be construed as her revenge. ●

Writer Strowan Robertson lives in Montreal.

Prim-but-prurient confidences

The love of W H Auden for "Chester, my chum" becomes everybody's business

Auden in Love: The Intimate Story of a Life-long Love Affair, by Dorothy J Farnan. Simon & Schuster (General Publishing in Canada), \$26.95.

Strowan Robertson ●

In the final paragraph of *Christopher and His Kind*, the ship bringing Isherwood and Auden to the States, to stay, enters New York harbour and Christopher prophesies:

Yes, my dears, each of you will find the person you came here to look for — the ideal companion to whom you can reveal yourself totally and yet be loved for what you are, not what you pretend to be. You, Wystan, will find him very soon, within three months....

More than thirty years later, in a poem called "Loneliness," Wystan Auden could still refer gratefully to that companion as "Chester, my chum." "Loneliness" was inspired by Chester's temporary absence.

Chester Kallman's existence hasn't been altogether ignored by earlier Auden biographers — that would be impossible, since so many dramas-for-music were the product of their collaboration and, anyway, Chester's presence by Auden's side at home and abroad was as usual as it was conspicuous — but heretofore he has been treated as an unaccountable adjunct, resented perhaps in some quarters, a boon raconteur and a renowned cook who shared the poet's table but

not, any longer, his bed. Why, when, by whom that arrangement was instigated was unworthy of speculation, presumably on the principle that it was the couple's own business.

Now they are both dead and Dorothy J Farnan considers these questions to be everyone's business.

When they met, their ages were 32 (almost) and 18: one was a bachelor of fervent intelligence and rebellious views whose reputation for grim lyric wit had preceded him across the Atlantic; the other was an A-student at Brooklyn College — though motherless, still living at home — who had ambitions of his own as a poet. Their first meeting was public and unproductive. A second, contrived by the student, was private and produced the union, to which Auden gave himself permanently.

Within two years Chester was unfaithful, not just in body but also in spirit, for he had fallen in love with a merchant seaman. Auden's reaction was violent. It is clear from the account in *Auden in Love* (what is not clear is the source of all this) that Chester had no problem withering the attempt to strangle him and was never in any danger, while Auden was soul-struck by the enormity of his intent, aborted though it turned out to be.

Crisis past, a *modus vivendi* was arrived at — on whose terms we are not to know, but it allowed for their sexual divergence — and it is that ostensibly unfair balance of their lives Ms Farnan chronicles, down to the poet's abrupt death and

his beloved's bathetic and drunken end soon after.

Dorothy Farnan's credentials for reporting on the intimacies of a rather unsavoury history seem unexceptionable: although she met neither of her subjects until after the rift (which is disclosed for the first time here by her), she did see them both often for all the years they were based in New York. Even after their transfer to Europe she was able to keep tabs, for in the meantime she had

Kallman, Auden in 1946: the reflected distinction of an "unaccountable adjunct"



A tribute to the unjustly obscure practitioners of physique art leaves out one vital fact

Reclaiming a gay artform

Photoflexion: A History of Bodybuilding Photography, compiled by William Doan and Craig Dietz. St Martin's Press, 1984. \$19.95 US.

Thomas Waugh ●

Photoflexion is a glossy, well-produced volume of photography about bodybuilding. Originally assembled several years ago by William Doan as a traveling exhibition, the collection asserts the claims of this genre of photography as an art with some success. The 115 black-and-white photos, all dazzling, constitute a survey of the evolution of a uniquely contemporary pop artform. One hundred years of images unfold, documenting and celebrating physical strength, caught in the motionless perfection of a pose.

This is the first serious attempt in book form to legitimize and pay tribute to the unjustly obscure practitioners of physique art. As a recognition of a principally artisanal and amateur artistic legacy, *Photoflexion* is a welcome contribution to the ongoing broader reclamation of many such traditions, from needle work to the home movie. In a culture that's increasingly alienated from the expensive caprices of the so-called avant-garde, this reclamation is of utmost importance.

Doan's brief introductory essay is fresh and informative. He chronicles the artform's early alliance to vaudeville, uncovers the work of pioneering documentarists of the physique milieu, and reveals in passing the surprising visibility of women on the scene around the turn of the century. (Judging from the book, women have only re-



Lon's Leroy Coleman: "This may be human, Mr Doan, but it's also homo"

warped by the traditional mind-body split of Western culture, its hatred of everything physical. Doan's awareness of the historical role of censorship in the evolution of the physique artform is fairly perfunctory. The simple fact that the Montrealer represented in the book, Jimmy Caruso, was charged in the early Sixties with several counts of possession and distribution of pornography (to take an example currently being researched by the Quebec Gay Archives), gives one pause.

At the same time, for physique photographers, taking over the heritage of Michelangelo in their basement studios also meant an ideological liability more commonly associated with commercial genres like advertising and pornography. One photo wittily (and I'm sure unwittingly) alludes to the ideological tenor of representations of the human physique by showing a model mimicking the pose of a muscular political monument from Fascist Italy. In many ways male physique art is phallicistic idolatry at its most blatant, as many feminists have pointed out. The irony is that at the same time the homoerotic undercurrent of the physique cult has embodied a significant challenge to that same phallicocracy.

This brings me to my major disappointment with the book, for it deals with neither the idolatry nor the challenge. We are unfortunately back to the subject of censorship. To put it bluntly, *Photoflexion* is sadly invalidated by its suppression of the essential homoerotic component in the bodybuilding tradition. I am referring not only to the disproportionate presence of gays and lesbians on the bodybuilding scene (this presence, substantiated by my informal polls in YMCA locker rooms across North America is a subject for future research). More importantly for the

purpose of this book, I am referring also to the absolute preponderance of gay artists and consumers in the cultural tradition of physique photography. This preponderance is for one thing legible in the photos themselves, in the irrepressible camp touches in the use of props, or in the often blatant eroticism of the poses, from the come-hither smirk of the model to the compositionally centred crotch.

But the gay domination of physique photography is even more conspicuous in its historical context. At least eight of the photographers featured in *Photoflexion* are well known for either their explicit gay identity or for their principally gay constituency: Roy Dean (the *Advocate* cactus school), Al Urbán, Robert Mizer (Athletic Model Guild), Lon (Hanagan), Bruce (Bellas) of Los Angeles, (Gregor) Arax, and Charles Renslow (Kris Studio). Almost half of the contemporary photos in *Photoflexion* came from these

Fascist mimic: but a camp undercut?



photographers. From the late Thirties on, these artists marketed their photos principally through gay or crypto-gay publications. Physique photography, both in magazines and on the mail-order market, was quite simply the most visible dimension of gay male culture in the decades before Stonewall.

Doan can't bring himself even to allude to the determining erotic motivation of the physique tradition, nor to the crucial significance of the gay audience. Descriptions of the erotic or camp elements of the works in question are at best coded and at worst homophobic: Mizer's and Dean's "careers... do not fit any categories but their own"; a few photos with coded phallic props "risk the edge of taste"; others are either "off-key" or "outrageous."

As a brilliant example of avoiding the obvious, take Doan's gloss on the lovely picture by Lon of black bodybuilder Leroy Colbert (from the Thirties? — most of the photos are infuriatingly undated). The model is lolling with great delicacy across what we are told is a Savonarola chair from a Martha Graham dance set, his massive arm grasping a bamboo rod and his flirtatious look directed upwards and out. What is communicated we are told is a playfulness and sense of humanity. True enough, but it is a playfulness of mixed and subverted codes and contradictory messages, expressing a lot more than Doan admits. Look at the image. The tense tautness of the chest and arms are undercut by the delicate restfulness of the pose; the supine "feminine" grace and vulnerability are at odds with the machismo of body shape, clenched fist and upright staff; those soft horizontal curves are ruptured by the severe vertical line; the overtly sexual smile is in tension with the coy articulation of nudity; the idealist cultural references of furniture and prop are gently mocked by those knowing upturned eyes. That may be human, Mr Doan, but it's also homo.

Not surprisingly, Doan's entire selection bears the same stamp of closetry: as just one index of this, the more suggestive and representative of the images of Mizer, Kris and Bruce are lamentably missing. (Mizer's career can be seen in all its cockteasing, salacious glory in *Physique: A Pictorial History of the Athletic Model Guild*, a 1982 Gay Sunshine book that unfortunately has other serious problems, notably the absence of bona fide historical comment.) Also missing, and I'm sure this is related, is any acknowledgement of the high visibility of black models both in the sport and the artform, and any discussion of racial motifs and possible stereotypes in the photos.

Bodybuilding photography has so much power as an art not because it's a documentation of a sport, nor because of abstract aesthetic qualities, but because it's a highly charged sexual representation loaded with cultural, erotic and political meanings. A safe, dishonest, and censored book like this one does nothing to advance our understanding of that power nor of those meanings. St Martin's Press has done more than any other firm to maintain a gay profile in mainstream American publishing, but this time they've fallen short of their own high standards. ●



Lisa Lyon: women muscling back in

cently reasserted themselves within the tradition, partly as a result of such pop stars as Lisa Lyon.) The possibilities for further historical excavation and for reflection on today's scene are suggested at every turn.

As Doan points out, in the modern era the fine arts abandoned the centuries-old idealization of the human body in painting and sculpture. The popular arts took over this tradition with a vengeance, in every realm from fashion photography to the movies. The risks of this annexation were many. At the one extreme, having left the academy and gallery, the cult of the body faced the censorship imposed by the whims of a schizophrenic, sexist society obsessed with talking about and representing sex, but incapable of doing so except in the dark. The censor's morality

Thomas Waugh teaches film at Concordia University.

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THE THIRD TEXT

David MacLean •

Real men and other fantasies

"I've just met the man of my dreams. He's fictional, but you can't have everything."

The best line of the year is delivered by Mia Farrow in Woody Allen's latest, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. It is a heartfelt comment on the confusion experienced when you fall for images of fantasy.

In the introduction to *Male Fantasies/Gay Realities: Interviews with Ten Men*, George Stambolian states, "by fantasy I mean all the products of the imagination — our dreams, visions and expectations, our myths and desires. These fantasies can be whimsical or immensely creative; they can control us or free us...."

In pre-Stonewall days, fantasy functioned as a secret path of desire (a bit like the yellow brick road) leading to the Emerald City of sexual freedom. In this age of post-liberation apathy shadowed by the spectre of AIDS, erotic fantasy has become something more complex and treacherous for gay men. Stambolian's compilation of interviews (some of them earlier published in *Christopher Street*) is one of several recent books that explore the role of fantasy in a variety of gay men's lives. It is "a mosaic of stories — about sex, love, and friendship, about family conflict, social prejudice, and pain." A masochist, a fetishist, a "handsome man" and a romantic are among the individuals who tell us their stories. Can you picture this line-up on the old *What's My Line?* Calling the men "Paul, Stephen, Mark and Fred" might have worked as well as "masochist, fetishist," *et al* — but that would mean the loss of something just a little bit sensational. What is revealed by the current line-up is Stambolian's participation in a collective understanding of the importance placed on appearance and sex. His men are all products of the New York City school of homosexuality (as a serious discussion of disco and its cultural importance embarrassingly testifies). The gay "scene" is discussed as both enemy and friend. These men can never go back to the closet, but for some of them a total exploration of their desire has exacted a high price. Stambolian is fascinated by the social rituals of male-dominated culture. Where the lines of power are drawn and what attributes are required for entrance into the charmed circle are issues he keeps returning to in these interviews. Like all good interviewers he gets the answers he wants by means of a very compassionate stalking of his prey.

Safe, the latest poetic prose work from Dennis Cooper, is another variation on the "men hurt me but I suffer so beautifully" premise, and evokes a longing that could be summed up as "if I could disappear up a boy's bum, I would." Indeed, the act of rimming is viewed here as the ultimate act of worship, the supreme sacrifice:

The man has his face in Mark's ass. It smells like a typical one, but belongs to a boy who's a knockout, so it's symbolic. It's sort of like planting a tree where no human has been.... It's an expression of caring.

And perhaps it is that. I'm not making a case here either for or against the joys of the rump. What I am concerned with (and Dennis Cooper's writing has covered this territory before and poeticized it

in the same way) is the way some gay men practice rituals of self-denial by giving over all to the man (or boy) who dominates and emotionally tortures simply by being so intimidatingly *male*. You know — so male it hurts.

Cooper's milieu is one in which the angel-demon-fucked-up-straight-boy-cum-saviour is all. The descriptions lavished on characters of this kind are romantic to the point of obsession. The main voices in the book share the same obsequious point of view, and have in common one all-pervasive character trait — a self-destructive attraction to the beautiful but doomed Mark, one of desire's saints, soon to rise above and away from all that Los Angeles smog.

Doug is walking along the beach, a tense look in his eyes....

Wouldn't you be tense musing about the nature of beauty twenty four hours a day?

Cooper invites us to share in all this worship even though the object of our devotion remains quite a mystery. Never have I read a book that

"Safe evokes a longing that could be summed up as, 'if I could disappear up a boy's bum, I would.'"

heaped so much affection on a character who barely exists. That he is basically bored when not having sex, and that he has a great ass — no, perfect: "it's his chief asset" — this much we know. His major achievement is getting picked up even though he has just vomited on himself. I don't doubt that being attracted to people like this can take on enormous romantic proportions, but the book never once strays from its own pretentious, inward-turning mythology of doomed romanticism. Gothic lovesickness of this kind might make more sense if the love object were more than just an embodiment of Cooper's private fantasies. Right now, Mark is simply a *Blueboy* centre-fold, and worthy of all this worship merely by virtue of existing. "What is left behind is Mark's beauty, safe, in a sense...." Yes it is safe, enshrined and immortalized, and as might be expected there is fog on the moors and mist outside the window on this lonely LA morning.

Cooper is not without his own slick (if somewhat calculated) style, and he is certainly quick on the old trigger. He knows exactly where he wants this book to be, and that is scattered across the bed with the other late-night reading material.

Mark's ass is wrinkled, pink and simplistically rendered, but nice. All that licking has plastered its hair to their homeland, smooth as a snow-covered countryside seen from a distance, at sunset.

Cooper tells us all about it, but I still think it's difficult to see with one's head enveloped in total darkness. ●

Male Fantasies/Gay Realities: Interviews with Ten Men by George Stambolian. Sea Horse Press, 307 W 11th St, New York, NY 10014 USA. \$7.95 US.

Safe by Dennis Cooper. Sea Horse Press, \$5.95 US.

**SMALL PRESS
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Joy Parks •

Pastoral radicalism

In January, I reviewed *The Square Root of Female* by Gillian Chase, published by Ragweed Press in Charlottetown, PEI. Since Charlottetown seemed like a rather unlikely place for much radical political activity (the travel posters are oh-so-pastoral and serene!), I simply had to find out more about Ragweed Press. I spent an afternoon with Ragweed's driving force, Libby Oughton, whose energy, courage and vision have made it possible for her to turn Ragweed, originally a small regional publishing house, into a feminist press. My visit with Libby renewed my faith that revolutions in unlikely places are still possible; and hopefully, a look at Ragweed's most recent women's titles will call attention to the strong and insightful writing being brought to fruition through the Press' careful nurturing.

On the surface, Susan Kerslake's *The Book of Fears* appears to be just that — a detailed catalogue of fear, real or imagined. Her carefully written short stories portray, in most disturbing detail, the inner landscape of a woman held prisoner by a madman, the chaotic confusion of a child-molester and the far too controlled voice of an ex-political prisoner who is forced to relive his torture while TV cameras record his story for "educational purposes." I was disturbed to find that after a first reading of *The Book of Fears*, I felt numb and needed to turn away from the horror of these stories. However, by reading the stories on a deeper, less literal level, I began to see that Kerslake's stories are allegorical. Her fears, while credible and possible, are themselves the focus of the work. Her characters live to fear, they have few other qualities; by exposing us to the extreme of pure fear, Kerslake offers us a perspective of the smaller place of fear within our own lives. *The Book of Fears* is a strange book and not many readers will be willing to read the book as a collection of parables without some prior warning. Kerslake's deadpan narrative demands an acquired taste for such stark description, but for those readers able to brave Kerslake's terrible world, *The Book of Fears* is an interesting look at the fears that live in the dark recesses of our minds.

In her ninth collection of poetry, *Binding Twine*, Penny Kemp states that she wishes to reach readers who might only turn to poetry in times of great stress. Many poets make this promise and few follow up, but Kemp keeps her promise as well as her craft. The result is simple and powerful. *Binding Twine* is a series of poems that tell the story of the poet's loss of custody of her two children. While the sense of bitterness at losing her children and being victimized by a system that rejects her values is depicted with much honesty and sensitivity, it is clear that the poet's sense of being betrayed by other women through the course of her custody trial is almost as difficult to deal with. In her particularly revealing "Fancy That, A Shame," we see how hard it is for Kemp to accept, as a feminist, the fact that many

women envy her freedom and are protective only of themselves and of their own kind.

"Did you see what she's wearing?"
*The Mothers aim arrows
to ground me. No kites
allowed. They want me
tied to apron strings
like theirs, ready to
role play. No chance
of change. Aloud.
"Well she can't get away with it."*

The reader soon realizes that Kemp is speaking not only of being the victim of a legal system that has taken her children from her, but of an anonymous, all powerful system that severs the connections between mothers and children, as well as between women for its own best interests and control. Penny Kemp's clarity and craft make real for readers the danger we all face when we step out of the prescribed limits of behaviour set for us.

British author Frankie Finn's unique and brilliant *Out on the Plain* is Ragweed's most impressive offering. Narrated by a woman who writes from her houseboat on the Thames, *Out on the Plain* involves the lives of four women, whose interactions are contrasted by the gruff and conventional judgements that damn this book as it is written. Perhaps "as it is written" is the operative

"My visit with Libby Oughton renewed my faith that revolutions in unlikely places are still possible; and hopefully, a look at Ragweed's most recent women's titles will call attention to the strong and insightful writing being brought to fruition through the Press's careful nurturing."

phrase in *Out on the Plain*, for "finishing" the novel seems much less important to the author than the process of the characters, their connections with each other and with the author, and the gradual evolution of their self-awareness and hidden strengths. The book is structured so that time, place and any of the physical elements that form boundaries around "literature" disappear and the reader must trust the author to reward her with the experience of being swept into the book. With its unbridled stream-of-consciousness flow, *Out on the Plain* is the book Virginia Woolf could have written had she been free of her critics. Frankie Finn challenges her readers to become a part of the inviting female landscape that exists "out on the plain" of women's consciousness. ●

The Book of Fears, by Susan Kerslake. \$8.95.

Binding Twine, by Penny Kemp. \$8.95.

Out on the Plain, by Frankie Finn. \$7.95.

Books can be ordered from Ragweed Press, Box 2023, Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 7N7. PS: Rumour has it that Ragweed will soon release a collection of poems by Christine Donald, a writer whose work has often graced the pages of TBP. More on that soon!

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Summer reading

From the city that sets all the trends comes **San Francisco Works Out** by Corbin Young, with more than fifty black-and-white photos! From Arbor House (Fitzhenry and Whiteside in Canada), \$7.95 US. Another book of humour for reading on the beach: **The Gay Cliché** by Tony Lang (St Martin's Press, \$5.95 US), which tells you "how to be a homosexual guy and still maintain some slight degree of individuality."

If you like popcorn on the beach, try Joseph Hansen's **Brandstetter and Others**, described as "five well-crafted tales of murder and twisted love that go down as easily as popcorn." From The Countryman Press, Woodstock, Vermont 05091, \$12.95 US.

The Carnivorous Lamb by Agustin Gomez-Arcos (Godine; no price given) is a beautifully written novel of two brothers who are also lovers, set in Franco's Spain. Gomez-Arcos deserves to be compared with the great Michel Tournier,

whose novel *Friday* has just been published. Robert Ferro, the author of *The Family of Max Desir*, now has a second novel, called **The Blue Star** (Dutton, \$15.95), about two young gay men touring Italy. **The Hustler** by John Henry MacKay (Alyson, 40 Plymton St, Boston, MA 02118, \$7.95) give an authentic picture of the Berlin sexual underworld in the 1920s. Jay McInerney's **Bright Lights, Big City** (Vintage/Random House, \$5.95 US), about New York City (of course), is the subject of a controversial review in the May issue of *Mother Jones* magazine. All these books come strongly recommended.

There are several new literary biographies. **The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams** by Donald Spoto (Little Brown, \$19.95) includes a discussion of most of Williams's plays and shorter works. **Tennessee: Cry of the Heart** by Dotson Rader is a much more intimate account of the playwright's drinking, drug-taking and cruising. H Montgomery Hyde, who wrote an exceptional biography of Oscar Wilde, has now released **Lord Alfred Douglas**

(Methuen, no price available). In **Jean Cocteau and the French Scene**, ten cultural historians pay tribute to the French poet, novelist, playwright, filmmaker and designer. The book, by Dore Ashton and others, is \$19.95 from Abbeville Publications, 506 Park Avenue, New York NY 10022.

Coming at the end of May from John Preston and Sasha Alyson (of Alyson Publications) is **Hot Living: Erotic Stories about Safer Sex**, which will include pieces by *TBP* contributors George Whitmore and Robin Metcalfe.

Lesbian books & mags

The Quebec lesbian feminist Jovette Marchessault has published three stories in translation under the title **Lesbian Triptych** (The Women's Press, Toronto, \$7.95). Also in translation is **The Day is Dark and Three Travellers** by Marie-Claire Blais (Penguin, \$6.95). From England comes Maggie Redding's hilarious novel about a sex-obsessed mother, a would-be monk and numer-

ous groping hands — it's called **The Life and Times of Daffodil Mulligan** (Brilliance Books, \$7.50 US). Eveline Mahyère's **I Will Not Serve** (Virago, \$7.95 US) describes a convent schoolgirl who falls in love with her teacher.

In **What Is Remembered** (North Point Press, 850 Talbot Ave, Berkeley, CA 94706), Alice B Toklas provides autobiographical recollections not written by Gertrude Stein. The surprising small-press bestseller of 1985 is **Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence** (\$9.95 from Naiad Press, Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302) with more than 100,000 copies in print!

Issue 14 of **Clit International** (23 Swiss francs, from CPP 12-9937, Centre Femmes, 5 bd St Georges, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland), includes a critique of the new American lesbian publication, **I Know You Know** (\$3.50 US per copy, from 5335 North Tacoma Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46220). You can check out both yourself; but non-francophone readers should be aware that about half of *Clit International* is in French.

Homosexualities

Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England by Louis Crompton (University of California Press, \$28.50 US) is a study of Byron's homosexuality set against the background of the harsh laws and attitudes of Regency England. In **Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia** (edited by Gilbert H Herdt, University of California Press, \$29.95 US), eight leading anthropologists argue that Western notions of a gay or straight person fail to make sense in the context of gender roles in parts of New Guinea and neighbouring islands. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in **Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire** (Columbia University Press, \$22.50 US), explains how male homophobia not only affected (and in part created) a male homosexual minority, but radically shaped the erotic, class and national ideologies of English men and women.

Andrew Keith & Alan O'Connor •

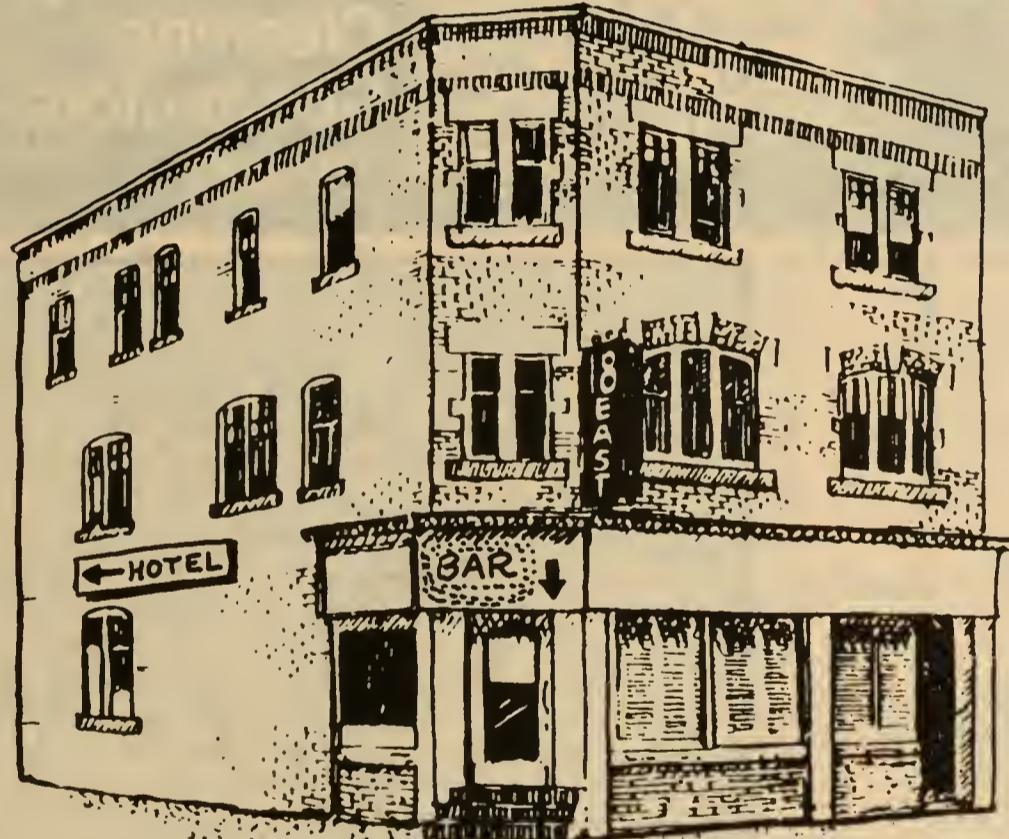
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Laura Foster •

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HOPE

...a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God, having the eyes of your
hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which
God has called you... EPHESIANS 1:17-18

LOVE

Love is patient and kind...rejoices in the right...bears all
things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all
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So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest
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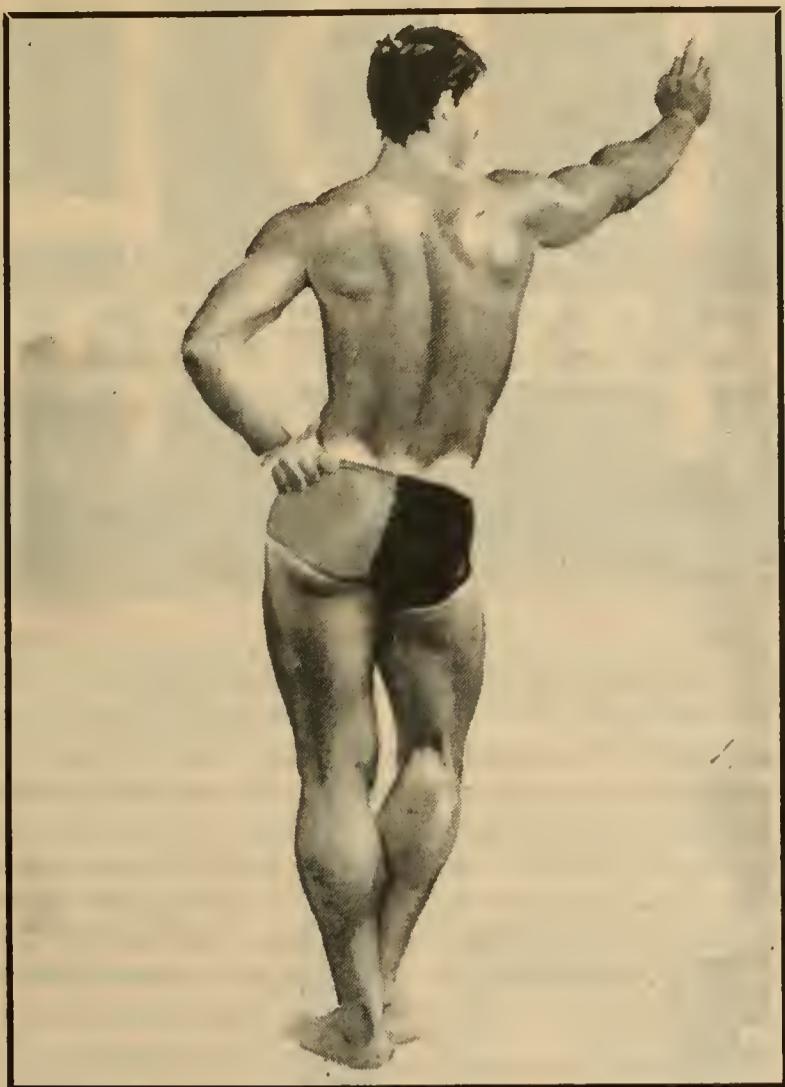
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Rule-making

continued from page 51

and some of the most unlikely ones from the point of view of those who look for equality are most successful. To acknowledge difference, otherness, is the beginning of real love in which each can be depending and dependable according to her own gifts and needs.

If a relationship lasts richly, the rules do have to change, whether they have to do with who takes out the garbage, who pays the rent, what goes on or doesn't go on in bed. I watch the earnest sweetness of one old woman learning to cook for the first time because her mate is recovering from an operation. (I wrote "lover," crossed it out, and wrote "mate" because I don't know whether they do make love or ever have, but I do know they have lived together and loved each other for probably forty years.) I watch myself learning sight-reading against long failures at that skill because Helen Sonthoff, the woman with whom I have lived for nearly thirty years, is having increasing trouble with her eyes. Now that she's retired, she's learned to tend the household machines so long my domain in order to give me more time to write. But it is not simply old age which changes patterns, makes new demands. Every period of living presents changes and problems no one could foresee, just as each lively one of us breaks rules which have not yet been written. I have now been forbidden to buy raffle tickets and put Helen's name on them. I have done it out of embarrassment at junk and craft sales when I find nothing else to buy, but the result has been prizes of unspeakable taste and uselessness.

Cooking, reading and raffle tickets may seem frivolous examples, but love is based in daily living which can be made up of petty disagreements and silly power trips or cooperation and laughter. In any couple both people can be comically overqualified for a job at hand or jointly defeated by changing a washer. Initial differences may minimize those puzzles. Willingness to change, to learn something new, overcomes most of them.

The defeating issues, fidelity, politics, money, responsibility for others, may call up our rule-making instincts, and they may be necessary from time to time for a time. I read the other day that Frida Kahlo agreed to remarry Diego Rivera, accepting his infidelities, as long as he gave up his conjugal right and paid no more than his share of the housekeeping, an odd bargain many of us would think, but it redefined their relationship enough for them to stay together to nourish each other in their work as no one else could.

Fairmindedness is not a simple talent, for each person's needs and desires are not only different but changing. There is no point in a second car when only one person knows how to drive. There is no point in the same number of lovers if only one wants them. Equal time in an argument is useless for a person who doesn't like to argue and is no good at it. Balance is probably more a matter of keeping one's own to help insure the balance of the other in the sometimes rocking boat.

I am very leery of any rule that is made after asking, "What would happen if...?" I am on surer ground with "This has happened. Now what?" It is both realistic and affectionate to know that most rules really are made to be broken. A father left his son a series of notes about a box of cookies I had baked for them. The first said, "Jimny, don't touch this box." Then inside the box, another note said, "Jimmy, don't eat these cookies." Finally on the bottom of the box a note said, "Jimmy, leave me at least four cookies."

When I next saw the box, four cookies remained. Fair enough. ●

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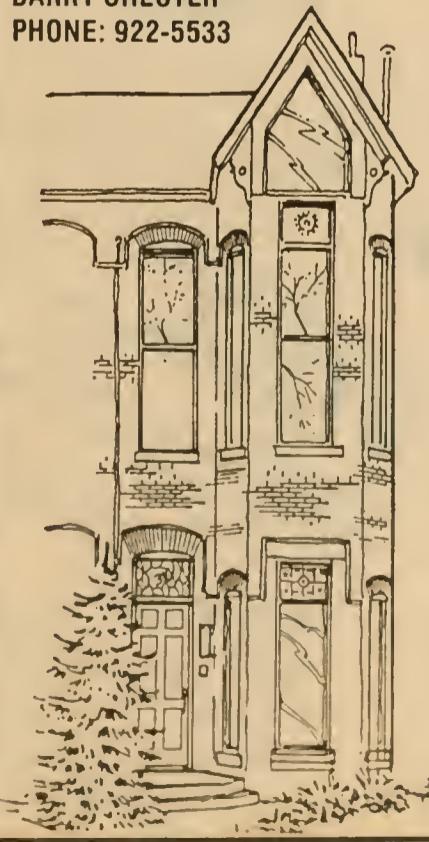
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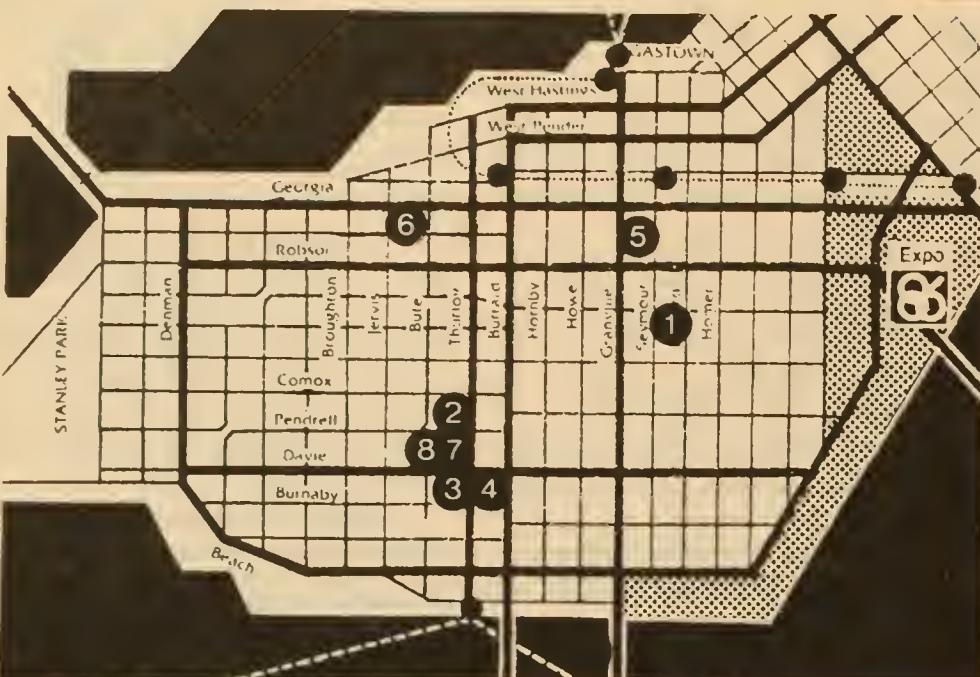
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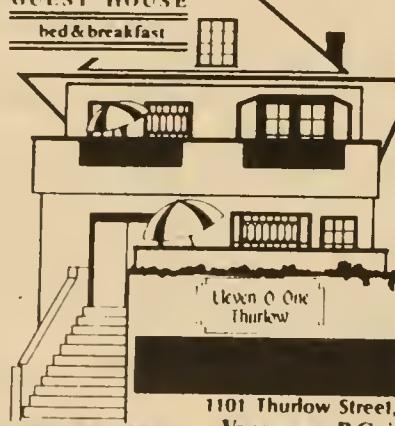
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THERE'S A BOOK BEHIND THIS MAGAZINE. London's *Gay News* called it "spectacular." New York's *Village Voice* said "The clarity and drive... engage any generous intelligence." The book is called *Faunting It! A Decade of Gay Journalism from The Body Politic*. It's yours for \$8.95 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. Order the book that *Christopher Street* called "a pleasure to read...so well editing that it becomes a document of the first decade of gay liberation." Send \$9.95 today to *Faunting It!*, Box 639, Stn A, Toronto ON M5W 1G2.

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MESSAGES

WE SEEM TO BE ENTERING A NEW AGE OF REPRESSION. Parents are losing custody of their children because the powers-that-be object to alternative lifestyles — even when those lifestyles are kept separate from, and have no effect on, the children. "The Parent SIG" (SIG-Special Interest Group) would now like to start a special newsletter that deals with loss of custody and we need input from many other concerned parents. Please send your suggestions to: The Parent SIG, 2483 Emerson Drive, Corona CA, 91720.



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY LEE. Love Bean.

I LOVE YOU ALL, TOO. Rick B.

SEARCHING FOR A FRIEND

IF YOU ARE a fellow Catholic, and run a cleaning business, and talked to me at Bud's for two hours on Friday night, May 3, why did you leave without saying anything? I would like to hear from you. Ed. Drawer F266.

PRISONERS

A NOTE to prisoners who wish to have pen pals — Metropolitan Community Church is offering a pen-pal service to men and women prisoners through the church's prison ministry. Prison Ministry, 730 Bathurst St, Toronto, ON M5S 2R4.

LEFT BANK BOOKS sponsors a Books For Prisoners project. Through donations and a postage grant we are able to send free miscellaneous books to inmates everywhere (provided an institution allows them). We offer special order books at cost (usually 35-40% off). Prisoners and other interested persons should write: Books For Prisoners, Box A, 92 Pike St, Seattle, WA 98101.

LONELY INMATE ON DEATH ROW here at the Florida State Prison. No family or friends to correspond with. 22 years, 150 lbs 5'11" and born under the sign Pisces. I would like to write gay people with a nice understanding. Age or race not important. Leonard Bean, N° 078935, Florida State Prison, Box 747, Starke, Fla, 32091.

EXTREMELY LONELY MAN presently incarcerated without a family or friend whom I can turn to. My interests are many and there is no limitation to my knowledge concerning today's world events. I especially love people of all race, creed and colour. Please do write, and also include a stamped envelope for a prompt reply. I will answer any and all letters I might receive. Greg Furlow, N° 156-946, Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio, 45699-0001.

I DO NOT RECEIVE ANY MAIL and it gets lonely. And I would enjoy writing and meeting people. I am 28 years old, 5'10" 170 lbs, and have brown eyes and hair. I like music, reading and sports. Greg Swank, N° 164001, Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio, 45699-0001.

GM, 22, BROWN HAIR, blue eyes, 6' 180 lbs, 30" waist. Will be released from prison in 2 months. Just coming out and looking for a place to live upon release. I haven't been gay very long but I try it and love it. John Carnes, Box B-44895, Florence, AZ, 85232.

DEATH ROW—WM, 5'9" 155 lbs. Love life, poetry, old cars, brush paints and independent friends. Will answer all who are sincere. Billy R Battenfield, 97638, Box 97-D-29, McAlester, OK 74501.

27 YEARS OF AGE, 5'7" 158 lbs, blonde hair, dark blue (bedroom eyes.) Straight-looking and acting. Likes: affection, stimulating conversation, exercising, reading, music, clothes and neatness, photography and good hot action. Brian D Phillips, 31554 Dorm 7, IN Dept of Corrections, Westville Corr Centre, Box 473, Westville, IN 46391.

FRIENDS

● TORONTO ●

WANTED: GAY MALE COUPLE to be "big brothers" to 18-month-old boy. Must be willing to make commitment of 8 hours/month for at least one year. Serious enquiries from men who genuinely want to spend part of their lives with a child. Drawer F258.

FRIENDS

FEMALE

● KITCHENER/WATERLOO ●

I'M A THIRD YEAR university student looking for gay females to be friends or lovers. You should be honest, responsible (especially emotionally), and not into drugs. Prefer clean, good-looking, fit people who like dancing, bicycling, exploring new places and have a thirst for knowledge. Drawer F207.

FRIENDS

MALE

● INTERNATIONAL ●

GENTLEMAN OVER 50?

MASCULINE, ATTRACTIVE, EUROPEAN male, 34, tall, trim, affectionate, sensitive, visiting USA and Canada summer '85, seeks masculine, warm, caring man over 50 for correspondence, visits, hopefully permanent relationship. May relocate anywhere for right person. Please send detailed letter and photo. Box 427, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

GAY SPANISH MAN, 20, would like Canadian friends. Please write to Drawer F196.

NIAGARA-HAMILTON-TORONTO

BODYBUILDER WITH GOOD PECS wanted for pec/tit worship by GWM, 38, 5'10" 160 lbs. Safe J/O sex. No S/M. Box 56, Niagara Square, Buffalo, NY 14201, USA.

SOUTH AMERICAN BROWN GAY MALE

SEEKS ATHLETIC and masculine Brown/Black buddy for sexual encounters and/or friendship. Not interested in lover relationship. I'm 5'11", 33, attractive, masculine, versatile and with nice hot ass. Toronto, NYC, Detroit,

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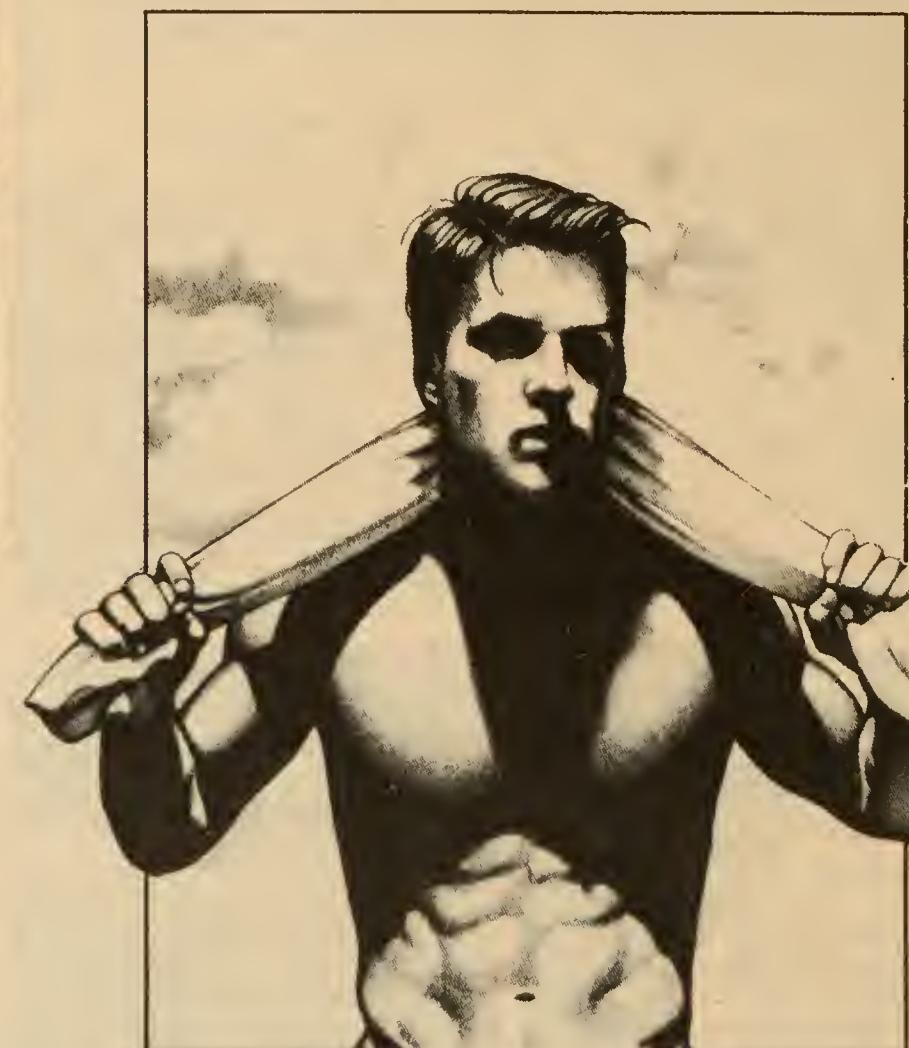
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Beaudry

Chicago welcome. Photo preferred but not necessary. Details and phone number, please. Drawer F197.

SERIOUS MONOGAMOUS AFFAIR

CHINESE MAN, 29, in Asia, wants a serious monogamous affair with a GWM. I want a masculine man who is clean, decent, loving and strictly monogamous to share my life. Willing to relocate to Canada. No drugs and diseases. Honest reply. Drawer F205.

YOUNG, GOOD-LOOKING ASIAN guy, 22 years old, 176 cm tall, Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM), Senior student, fashion model, love summer beaches, athletic sport, discos and Asian cooking, also very flexible in bed. Seeks contact for sincere and honest gay relation. Mr Roque Franco, PO Box 823, Bacolod City 6001, Philippines.

NATIONAL

J/O LOVER

UNIVERSITY STUDENT 21, trim, young, new, hot. Love J/O, video, would like to experience more! Saskatoon area, but travelling to Ottawa, Toronto in summer. Hot letter, photo, phone. Discreet, expect same. Box 1334 Saskatoon, Sask, S7K 3N9.

ALBERTA

GWM, 34, 5'11" 155 lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, professional. Interests include: bicycling, swimming, squash, travelling, theatre, classical music, long walks and cuddling. You: white, black, Oriental, Asian, not important but under 35 and in good shape. Will answer all with photo. Drawer F219.

CALGARY

FUCKBUDDIES

FUCKBUDDIES FOR REGULAR and/or occasional sex wanted by couple. Max waist 32". Discretion and mutual trust a must. Write Box 1002, Calgary, T2P 2K4.

SASKATOON

LOOKING FOR DOMINANT cowboys, leathermen, bodybuilders, studs (25 to 40), into hot nights in secluded places. I'm 27, 5'10" 147 lbs, brown hair, moustache, scruffy, horny. Drawer F216.

WINNIPEG

GWM, 26, 6' 180 lbs, GOOD-LOOKING, all-American type, interested in meeting husky fit male 30-45 for discreet good times. Photo appreciated. Drawer F238.

ONTARIO

GWM COUPLE, 30s, seek others, single or couple, for friendship, good times, sex etc. Have cottage on beach, enjoy sunning, swimming and sex. Reply with photo. Box 36, Perkinsfield, Ontario L0L 2J0.

LET'S GO DOWN TOGETHER

SCUBA DIVER SEEKS BUDDY to share summer weekend diving and camping excursions and Caribbean fall vacations. Have cosy camper van, frequent visitor to Bruce Peninsula and Tobermory. Swimming, nude sunbathing, hiking the Bruce Trail, cycling, canoeing, XC-skiing are my outdoor interests; music, photography, audio-visual productions are some of my indoor pursuits. Turned on by well-filled jocks, exotic underwear and want to learn about leather. 5' 10" 155 lbs, WASP. Can teach interested non-divers if sincere. Replies (photo appreciated) to Box 2612, Stn F, Scarborough, Ontario M1W 3P2.

SMALLTOWN MAN — farmer wanted by white, masculine Latino man, 28, hairy, bearded, 5'7" 142 lbs, attractive, honest, into one-to-one. You: masculine, tough and tender and down to earth. Picture and number please. Drawer F203.

MALE, 35, EDUCATED, seeking younger male. Qualifications: hung, responsible, solid, caring and also educated. Object: mateship. Drawer F214.

CANADIAN BODYBUILDERS

AM INTERESTED IN meeting professional and serious bodybuilders of Canada for get togethers. Will pay all expenses required. Bodybuild myself. Those interested write with photo, serious only. Drawer F220.

WM, 27, EASTERN ONTARIO, would like to hear from guys 21-35 in Eastern Ontario and Montreal areas for friendship and possible relationship. Interests include: music, films and quiet good times. Please write Drawer F249. Photo/appreciated.

SUDBURY

SUDBURY MALE, 21 YEARS, 5'11" 150 lbs, masculine, non-smoker, non-drinker, good-looking, loves music, theatre, monogamous. Seeks same 25-35 for relationship. Reply with photo: Kevin, Box 1401, Sudbury, Ontario P3E 4K1.

SOUTHERN ONTARIO

CALIFORNIAN EX-SAILOR 27, 6 ft 190 lb, straight-acting seeks 18-30 yr masculine Simcoe County male. Box 873, Barrie, L4M 4Y4.

BANCROFT/OTTAWA AREA

GWM, 37, SLIM, 6'1", Greek P and French A/P, seeks well-endowed Greek A for summer fun. All races welcome. Send photo and letter to Suite 57, 275 King Street East, Toronto, M5A 1K2.

MIDLAND BI NEEDS SUCK & FUCK BUDDIES

BI WM, 52, 5'6" 155 lbs, needs sex sessions with clean, agreeable males. Reply to Drawer F251.

KITCHENER

YOU NEED DISCIPLINE

AGGRESSIVE MALE, 36, 5'11" 160 lbs, seeks younger submissive. Turn ons include denim, leather, rubber, B&D, WS, boots, etc. Must be health conscious. Send phone and descriptive letter. Drawer F235.

PHOTO: ROBYN BUDD



ST CATHARINES

GWM, 41, 5'11" 150 lbs. Interests: running, skiing, theatre, films, skating, nightlife, weights, travel, J/O, videos, dining, NYC. Et j'aimerais connaître un gars qui m'aiderait à parler français. Good shape, honnête, propre. Prefer husky, in-shape male, 25-45, any race. Drawer F036.

HAMILTON

HAMILTON/LONDON

BUSINESS MAN, 34, BI, visiting Hamilton-London weekly requires a dinner companion/escort. Must be straight appearing and intelligent. Write in detail about yourself, background and why I would be interested in you. Students most welcome. Could be very rewarding to right individual. A completely descriptive letter and recent photo (colour, full-length preferred) will prompt my immediate response for interview. Reply to L Campbell Box 955, Waterloo, ON N2J 4C3.

BANCROFT AREA

GAY MALE SEEKS SAME 25 to 35 for discreet good times. Reply with phone number and photo if possible. Drawer F175.

TORONTO

NAHANNI, AUYUUITTUQ, QUETICO. Fellow canoeist, pilot, trekker sought by professional photographer to share in the planning and living of these and other indescribable wilderness experiences. No lily-dippers please. Drawer E715.

MASTER NEEDED by young slave. GW Portuguese, 21, 5'9" 165 lbs, wants kind, firm master who will teach S/M, B/D, T/T and other pleasures to make me serve. Send photo.

to, phone and good letter. Will consider any, especially master my own age. Drawer F193.

TIRED OF GOING to the bars alone. Sincere gay guy, 30, too shy to strike up conversations with strangers, seeks to do so with this ad. I really would like to make some new friends. Drawer F120.

LONELY WHITE MALE, 24, seeks oriental for gentle times. I am a student, 5'7" 125 lbs, slim, seeking student or young professional. I am very discreet and health conscious. Send photo and letter and I will do same. Jeremy, 65 Front West, N° 030-142, Toronto, ON M5J 1E6.

ATTRACTIVE BLACK male, very well hung, seeks non-promiscuous, straight-acting male to age 32 for possible relationship. Must have nice body and hot receptive buns. Photo and phone, thanks. Drawer F208.

EUROPEAN CANADIAN EDUCATED male, 49, single, mature, warm, loving needs a true trusting man with stable character and serious approach to life, for joys and pains, sharing and caring, teaching and learning. Box 165, Stn G Toronto, M4M 3G7.

MOUSTACHE GUY, AGINCOURT area, seeks well-built exercise buddy. Have some weights, also into swimming and cycling. 299-0502, early evenings.

LEATHER NOVICE

GWM, 34, BLOND, 5'8" 145 lbs, 7" cut, well established, own place, seeks relationship with leather oriented man, travel workouts, jogging, Greek, French, fantasy. Photo, please, if possible. Drawer F227.

RIMMER, GWM, 32, 6' 170 lbs, would like to service your ass. Into fantasy trips of all kinds, bondage, watersports etc. Videos, J/O sessions. Drawer F131.

A BUDDY, THEN SEX. If you prefer this sequence, are slim, 30-42, independent, warm, caring and into becoming the best man you can be, then contact this 39-yr-old GWM and explore the possibility of a lengthy journey on a relationshipSHIP! Drawer F035.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COLLAR ME, attach a leash and then? Novice, submissive 6'2" 190 lbs, 33 would like to experience this and more. Reply with detailed letter. Drawer F142.

WILL GIVE BARE BOTTOM SPANNING

TORONTO GUY will give bare bottom spanking, paddling, etc. Your limits respected, write now and let us get together soon. Drawer F228.

TEDDY BEAR

NOT YOUR NEW TRENDY type but a comfortable, well-worn (40s), plump (205 lbs), hirsute model, who needs hugging, cuddling, affection, loyalty and friendship. I need an intelligent, outgoing playmate. Interested in companion ship too. Drawer F229.

METAPHYSICS?

GWM, 25, 5'9" 155 lbs, brown/blue. Deeply interested in things psychic and spiritual. Seeking same, any race (would prefer oriental or black) under 25, with similar interests, for possible ongoing relationship. Photo and detailed letter about self to drawer F230.

HOT & READY TO CUM

GWM, 35, 160 lbs, 5'6" seeking a young male for long and hot horny sessions. I like oral, J/O, cuddling. Prefer male 21-35 who is slim or average build, cut, hung and has lots of dark bushy cock hair. I also like a male who wears jeans and T-shirts most of the time. Should have apartment in Toronto. Send detailed letter with photo and phone number. Drawer F231.

SUBMISSIVE MALE NEEDS TRAINING

GWM, 36, 5'11" passive, wants master into b/d, golden showers, humiliation, strict training. My fantasy is being gang-raped. Age and looks unimportant. Phone if possible. Drawer F232.

F/F BODY BUILDER bottom seeks aggressive top or versatile stud for deep therapy; receptive, hot ass play. Safe/clean/healthy. Drawer F233.

BLACK HUNG STUDS! Eager white handsome young slave offers complete oral and anal service. Have video. Command me, sir! Drawer F234.

ATTACHED CLEAN FUN, discreet GWM looking for same. Hairy body like mine a plus. Over 18. Your place days. Write now. Drawer F237.

MARRIED MALE has the boots, helmet and leathers. Seeks friend with motorcycle for casual meetings. Box 157, Woodbridge, L4L 1B1.

ATTRACTIVE BISEXUAL late 30s. Clean, healthy, not into bar scene, requires servicing. Age, race, looks unimportant, no strings, no games. Just action and discretion. Drawer F239.

ATTRACTIVE WM, 24, 165 lbs, seeks clean shaven muscular or lean WM to 30 for clean fun and good times. Replies to "C," Box 1128, Stn F, Toronto, ON M4Y 2T8.

34-YEAR-OLD WM would like to meet GWMs 16-22 from Brampton area. The naked body I adore, especially buns. I love to explore all parts of the body with my tongue and lips. Also I like gay video movies and I have some. Photo please and letter. Reply to Drawer F240.

BI MALE, WELL-HUNG seeks GM to 28 for discreet encounters leading to possible relationship. Must be clean and attractive. Please reply with phone and photo. No box numbers. Drawer E926.

HOT HAIRY FIRM MUSCULAR BUNS

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. State age, weight, height, sexual needs, fantasies. You must be Greek active, clean, considerate, virile. Nude photo gets immediate response. Drawer F206.

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE???

WHERE ARE THE REALLY beautiful people — the successful guppies who are beyond trendy superficialities? (It's

MASTER(S) WANTED:

THIS HOT 23-YR, 5'9" 125 lbs, brown hair, brown eyes, slave needs master(s) with hot fisting hands, also into giving raunch W/S, recycled beer, T/T, enemas, light S/M, B/D, toys, leather, rough ass-play. First timers also welcome. My ass needs servicing. Phone, photo (returned) and detailed letter. Drawer F210.

WRESTLING FANTASY

THERE MUST BE a big guy who can satisfy this fantasy and others regularly, so put on your sweaty well-used jockstrap. I'll make you put more sweat into it. Let's test your powerful legs. It could be fun. Discretion assured and expected. Let's wrestle. F209.

not the bar crowd that runs this town!) Prefer qualities to match mine — dependable, quiet, open, intelligent, gay men with integrity, 25-40, wanting a non-promiscuous, supportive relationship. Write in confidence. Thanks. Drawer F204.

ATTRACTIVE CHINESE, 20s, seeks sincere guy, 18-38, for serious long term relationship. Sincere only! Photo appreciated, all answered. Drawer F201.

GWM, LIVES DOWNTOWN, good job, 31, 6'1" 175 lbs, seeks "shorter" GWM 26-32 years who lives in Toronto. Should be steadily employed, have sense of humour, enjoy sharing simple and ordinary things in life. Only honest, reliable individual who is looking for sincere relationship should reply with phone number. Drawer F200.

NO NEED TO BE ALONE

GUESS WHAT? There are many terrific people in Toronto who don't waste their lives in bars and discos. If you are into personal growth, healthful living, long-term friend- or relationships, and couple independent thinking with mutual respect, then let's meet. It's fun to be alone together! Write and find out. Drawer F199.

HANDSOME YOUNG MODEL TYPE

WANTED BY 30-YEAR-OLD professional for mutually rewarding regular private encounters. No strings attached. Discretion assured. Photo appreciated. Drawer F160.

FLEX MUSCLE

BICEPS AND PECS, lats and abs. GWM, 31, body-builder, seeks same to swap protein. Photo please to assure answer. Drawer F158.

SLAVE WANTED

MASTER, 50, MERCILESS, seeks slave willing to surrender all. B/D, S/M, humiliation, limits respected. GWM. Race not important. Drawer F198.

FAT, OLD AND UGLY

REALLY 40s, 205 lbs, ordinary looking. If you're still reading, please write Drawer F223.

WHERE IS THE GWM, 40-50 year old master with the hand to give a panty-clad, garter belt and short-skirted bottom a TLC spanking. Only those who act on reply — others no need. For the one who is master, the panties will surely drop. Drawer F225.

DOMINANT, FRIENDLY, masculine GWM, non-smoker in 40s, wants to stimulate and fuck non-competitive, gentle GWM with slim body and firm buns. Me: a pleasant-looking guy, 5'10" 165 lbs, 6" cock with a good sense of humour. You: reality-oriented single, who isn't looking for a fantasy man or coitus machine. Let's enjoy my sexiness and energy. Phone numbers only please. Pax. Drawer E675.

MIDDLE-AGED BUSINESSMAN, frequent visitor to Toronto, seeks attractive university student, 21 plus, any race, any colour, for friendship and possible fun times. Please send phone number and picture if possible. Thanks. Drawer F174.

GWM, 33, 5'5"; slim, dark; hairy chest, legs; trim beard; professional educator-therapist. Attractive, healthy, free-thinking, ethical, spiritually-evolved, non-Christian. Affectionate, sensuous, stable, masculine, solid, good-humoured and absolutely monogamous. Non-smoker, dislike bars and ghetto behaviour. Enjoy film, theatre, books, camping, travel. See need to explore safe, satisfying, low-risk alternatives in male-to-male intimacy. Hope to meet one exceptional man who can relate to all of the above, to develop solid friendship, possible relationship. Appreciate descriptive letter. Photo (will return) guarantees response. Drawer F191.

GAY PROFESSIONAL MALE COUPLE, 35 & 29, seeks masculine, good-looking friends, active and under 40 (max waist 32") who would enjoy a GROWING relationship. Let's talk. Drawer F260.

WANTED: MASCULINE & FRIENDLY GWM

ATHLETIC YOUNG GWM 25, 5'7" 135 lbs, gold/brown hair, green eyes, looking for 20-30 masculine attractive GWM not into bar scene. Enjoy the outdoors and all pleasures of life including "love." Let's give a try. Drawer F278.

MASCULINE, AFFECTIONATE PROFESSIONAL, 37, 5'10", trim, good physique, moustache, hairy, circumcised. Enjoy fitness, outdoor activities, travel, theatre, movies, music. Seek muscular non-smoker, sincere, 25-45 in Metro area for fun and friendship. Phone and photo appreciated. Drawer F261.

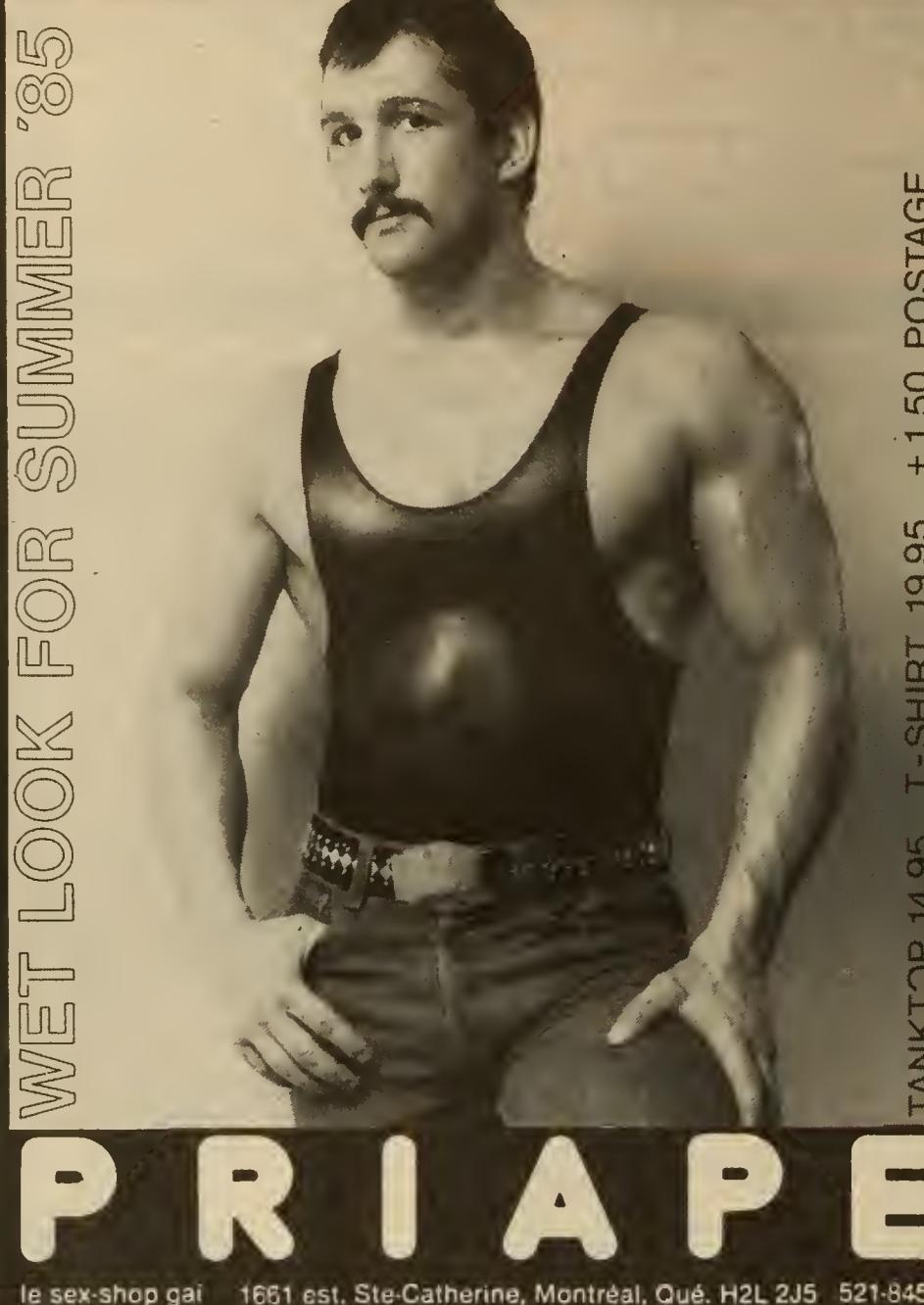
LET'S MEET. I'm a 27-year-old attractive, professional Asian who'd like to meet another compatible man, under 35, for friendship or relationship. I enjoy theatre, working out, travelling and quiet times. Drawer F262.

COMPETITIVE SWIMMER AND SAILOR, 6' 135 lbs, defined build, little body hair, with career desires the company of a healthy, fun-loving man. Photograph and note to Drawer F265.

PARTIAL TO LEATHER & DENIM. GWM, 38, 6' 170 lbs, seeks to expand limits, especially in TT/DT B&D and ass play. All explicit replies answered. Box 312, Stn J, Toronto, ON M4J 4Y8.

GOOD SEX, as well as such not-so-trivial pursuits as books, theatre, movies, ballet, opera, gourmet cooking, dining out, bridge, cats, working out, cryptic crosswords, picnics, conversation, golf, racquetball. Professional gay male, 37, whose interests include the above, seeks similar

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men, 20 to 45, for friendship and more? Phone and photo appreciated, but not essential. Drawer F267.

GWM COUPLE, LONG-ESTABLISHED lovers, 49, but young-looking, average looks, versatile, down to earth and unpretentious, not into bar/baths scene, varied interests, wish to broaden horizon and meet other gay males, couples or singles, for possible friendship and sexy get-togethers. Photo and phone number appreciated. Drawer F268.

TRUSTING INTIMACY (not necessarily sex) with another male is my goal. If you like classical music, we might become friends, even if I am too old to turn you on. Write anyway. Unless you are Peter Pan, I'm not all that old! Drawer F269.

HAIRY, HUNG AND HORNY

GWM, 32, 170 LBS, 6' seeks another hairy and/or well-hung guy to service or be serviced by. I've got a big cock, receptive hairy ass, hot lips and great technique. Take your pick. Age not important. Be discreet. Photo and phone please. Drawer F270.

LOVER MAN, WHERE CAN YOU BE?

HANDSOME GUY, 21, MASCULINE, seeks serious romantic man 25-40 who is truly looking for a special someone to fill the void in his life left by bars, clubs and cruising. Only responses with recent photo and phone number will be answered. Drawer F271.

BIG, BUTCH AND BASHFUL

GWM (6'2" 250 LBS) into bodies, muscles, pecs and wrestling seeks muscular macho man. All replies answered, outline your scene. Drawer F272.

INEXPERIENCED YOUNG WM, 22, slim (5' 10" 140), first time out, seeks same or affectionate young guy to help show the way. Letter and phone (photo would be nice). Discretion assured. Drawer F273.

DISCIPLINE

I'D LIKE TO MEET DOMINANT, aggressive guys with good trim bodies who enjoy giving heavy, non-sexual strapplings. I'm not a slave. Don't go for bondage or far-out S/M. I do like wearing leather. I'm 56, 5'5" 140 lbs, work out and have a pretty good body. Have a collection of well-used straps and a place. Jeff Carson, Box 1003, Stn F, Toronto, M4Y 2T7.

GWM, 35, 5' 10" 160 lbs, straight looks, seeks a gay black male with great body, good-looking moustache for friendship and possible fun times. Phone number and letter with details and photo appreciated. Drawer F277.

GWM 30, 5'10", average build (sometimes too straight-looking and acting for gay guys to take a chance on). I like oral, j/o, videos, active Greek. All Levis, denim or cords, leather jackets. Cock size is not important. Looking for average guy for friendship first, relationship possible in the future. Your age doesn't matter if you can relate to a 30-year-old who feels there is more to life than being a billboard for the "gay lifestyle." Not into bars every night. Phone number and non-revealing photo will get the fastest replies. Drawer F166.

ONE-TO-ONE RELATIONSHIP

WANT THE ABOVE heading. I don't think 50 is too old. I am and I don't if you're a top man, big and hairy. I'm a bottom, small type. Will try anything with right man. I'm not versatile or well-endowed but also like a pair of big thighs around my neck. I am clean, sincere and reliable. Drawer F184.

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GWM, 48, 6' 200 lbs, enthusiastic expert rimmer, water-sportsman and much more — both ways. Also into leather, enemas, sweat, hot times, fantasies. Need shaving and possibly piercing too. Tell me your scene. Serious earthy types only — no novices. Nothing cosmic. Drawer F276.

GWM, 28, 6' 165 lbs, blond/moustache, educated (2 degrees), self-employed (3 businesses), dynamic, fun, humorous and outgoing. I want a permanent relationship — no one-night stands. However, I am selective: you must be 25-32, intelligent, ambitious, down-to-earth and patient enough to make a friend. Interests include: camping, finance, antiques, travel. Respectable, sincere persons are invited to call 887-9434.

HANDSOME, WELL-BUILT, 26-year-old struggling artist needs help with the rent. Eager to meet and make special arrangements with an older generous gentleman. Call Bob 921-2614.

RUBBER/LATEX TOP wants to play games with you. B/D, light S/M, CBT. Your fantasies considered, wearing Latex not negotiable. Inexperienced welcome. Asians/Orientals especially welcome. Member NWRM. Drawer F245.

AFFECTIONATE GUY SEEKS FRIEND

ARE YOU YOUTHFUL, attractive, non-smoker, quiet, friendly, sincere, hot, horny, love to travel? You can share my house and car in Mississauga, 3 bedroom, piano, stereo, patio, park setting. No rental fee, GO Transit to city. Send detailed letter with phone and picture if possible. I'm a

youthful 50, love music, gardening, cooking, theatre, fitness. Drawer F244.

MATURE, GAY MALE, TALL, heavy build, educated, cultured, good appearance, wants to meet same or similar for camping, theatre, concerts, travel, other interests. Drawer F243.

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR LOVE in all the wrong places. GWM, 30, 5'10", average build, sincere, affectionate coddler, sense of humour, wants to meet other males 25 to 40 for friendship and/or possible monogamous relationship. Photo would be nice. Drawer F247.

6'2 AUBURN BARITONE, mid-20s, crazy about musical theatre and light opera, wishes to meet preferably non-smoking moderate drinker mid-30s, dark beard and moustache would be nice, for friendship, possible relationship. Not into drugs, baths or insecure closets. I'm honest, romantic, energetic, thin, theatrical-looking and waiting. Photo appreciated. Drawer F255.

HOT FOR MEN'S FEET in worn construction boots, sneakers. GWM, bottom, 43, 6' 170 lbs. Give great head. Eager to learn, explore UNDER master. Photograph appreciated. Drawer F257.

PHOTO: ROBYN BUDD



CHINESE, 25, ATTRACTIVE, slim, sincere, discreet, clean, into most things. Seeks mature GWM, over 40, masculine, hairy chest over 40 inches, any shape, size, bald OK, no beard. Show me some good life. Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, NY. Photo appreciated. Writer Advertiser 2 Bloor St. West, Suite 100-530, Toronto, M4W 1E2.

YOUNG MALE 24

STRAIGHT-LOOKING AND ACTING, considered cute, seeks similar guy same age or under for friendship and/or relationship. Interests are music, camping, flying. All replies answered. Photo appreciated. Absolutely confidential. Drawer F250.

GWM, 20, 5'6" 155 lbs, looking for male 18-35 for physical relationship. Reply to Box 227, 3148 Kingston Rd, Suite 209, Scarborough, Ontario M1M 2P4.

MALE WANTED: Male, 40s, wants to meet with other males. Someone out there who enjoys the company of an older male — age no barrier. Maybe you're new in the city and want a new friend? Have own apartment for fun times and car for trips. All replies will have complete discretion and honesty. Lots of spare time and hours and minutes to spend with someone. Drawer F242.

ATTRACTIVE, SUCCESSFUL businessman, 35 years, independent, seeks similar good-humoured male, 25-35. Tired of bar scene. Serious replies only. Drawer F241.

FIT, DEFINED MASCULINE, attractive GWM — above average endowment, looking for generous French active gent for mutual benefit. Box 1110, Station F, Toronto.

GWM, 27, masculine, attractive, discreet, very well-endowed, would like to meet blue jeans or black jeans type guy or couple, 18-30, for mutual pleasures, friendship and possible relationship. A little black leather turns me on a lot too!!! Photo if possible and phone. Drawer F189.

GOOD-LOOKING FASHIONABLE Chinese male, 24, 5'9" 138, brown hair, eyes, straight acting, fun-loving adventurous. Seeks WM to 30 for get-togethers, possible relationship. Candid replies with phone to Box 1128, Stn F, Toronto, M4Y 2T8.

OTTAWA, 40, 6'1" 175 lbs, not looking for lover but occasional meetings and friendship. Married welcome, good build, large cock preferred. Discretion. Write Drawer F218.

ORIENTAL WANTED

SINCERE, GENTLE, sense of humour, diverse interests, gay white male 30s, 5'7" 145 lbs, muscular, works out regularly. French, Greek active and passive. Local or visitors. Photo appreciated — sexier the better. Will reply with same. Drawer F211.

● MONTREAL ●

MONTREAL GWM, 39, slender, virile, anal virgin, seeks patient tender, delicate topman with slender penis to introduce me to the pleasures of sodomy. Drawer F274.

● MARITIMES ●

CAPE BRETON GWM, 5'6" 150 lbs, discreet, straight acting, mature, seeks same qualities for meeting and possible relationship. Drawer F224.

LET'S CELEBRATE LIFE

ME: GWM, 36, honest, mature, fit, slim, dark hair, caring with lots of love to give, enjoy travel, music, theatre, working out. You: 30 to 45 with comparable attributes, looking for a shared monogamous relationship. Us: companionship with beautiful, tender moments together. Southern Maritimes, Halifax. Drawer F194.

ANY ACTION DOWN EAST?

ATTRACTIVE GUY touring Maritimes this summer would like to hear from guys who know the landscape and who like some good times and hot action. Letter with phone and photo svp, Box 204, Westmount PQ, H3Z 2T2.

● CHARLOTTETOWN ●

MALE, 28, Ch'town area wishes to meet same 25 plus for friendship/relationship. Enjoy music, movies, going out and quiet times at home. Phone number appreciated. Serious replies only please. Drawer F246.

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GOOD-LOOKING, well-built soldier/cop type available as model/escort. Duane, 920-1428.

● WOMEN ●

TWO ATTRACTIVE GAY WOMEN, 22 and 24, available for personal escort. Leave message for Helen or Cheryl: 690-7035.

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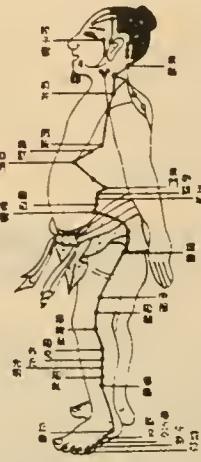
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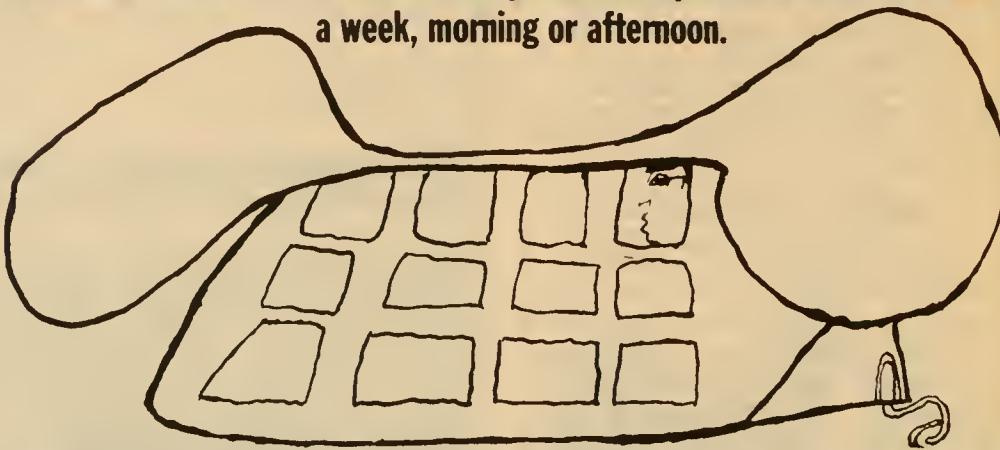
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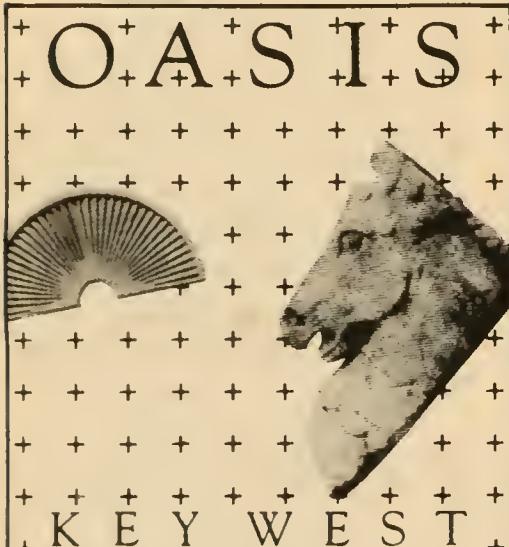
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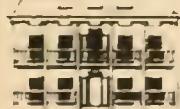
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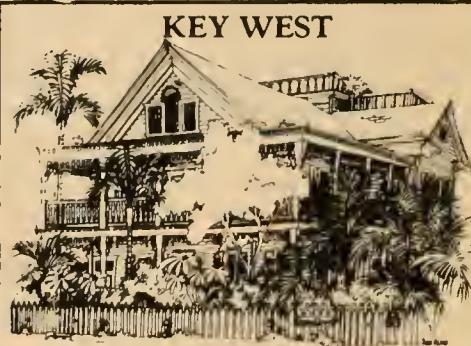
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RuleMAKING

I once taught at a boarding school where at the end of each year all the rules, except those to do with physical safety, were

crossed out so that in the fall students returned free to use their judgment until such time as it seemed necessary to make a new rule because too many students were staying up and out too late, because there were too many injured animals left in the biology lab, because too many students' dogs were attending classes.

We are as much rule-as tool-making creatures because few of our behaviour patterns are handed to us in our genes, and we need not only to shape our environment but to get along with each other in order to survive. I suppose, because I moved around the continent a lot when I was a child, I learned early that, though all communities have rules, they are not the same ones in, say, suburban California and rural Kentucky. So I grew up with some respect for the necessity of rules, but also with some critical distance from any particular rule's usefulness or moral justification.

I was delighted to find that, though a few rules at the boarding school cropped up early and regularly, a fair number did not recur. Since my father as a student made a practice of breaking rules not yet written, I always had special admiration for those students with the creative imagination to set the rule-makers to work on such things as not turning off the water mains into the teachers' quarters or not taking the school tractor to church. I was also amused at the head mistress's rule every year that no student be allowed to get up at 4:30 am on Patriots' Day to witness the re-enactment of Paul Revere's ride. It was the only way she could be sure that students would think it worthwhile to lose sleep for an historic event.

Though some people and some communities thrive on absolutes, most of us under rigid regulation chafe and pine, and the chafers are more apt to resort to destructive than creative rebellion, the piners to waste away. Unless there is some compelling and overriding reason, therefore, people's behaviour should be codified as little as possible.

As lesbians who have until very recently had no community, whose relationships have been themselves considered immoral if not criminal, we are for the first time in a position of declared responsibility, able to join together, able to describe for ourselves what the nature and value of our relationships are. We should not be surprised at how raggedly we have begun that process.

by

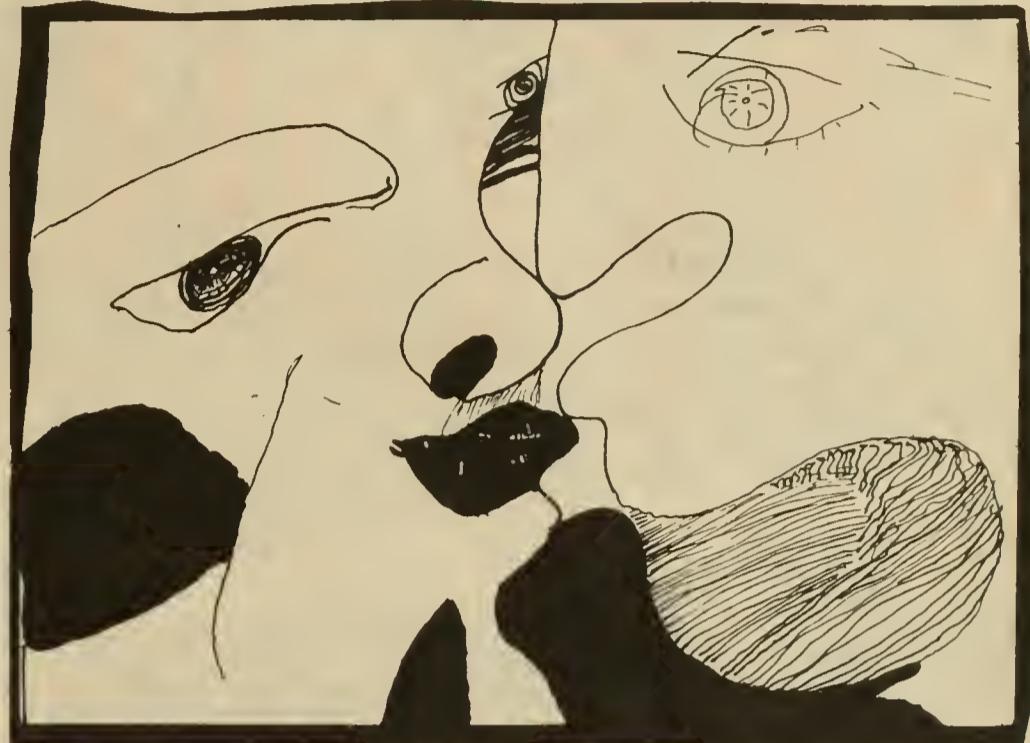
Many of us have internalized the larger community's prejudice and take any failure as an indication that we are, after all, sick and depraved. I have had letters from ex-lesbian nuns begging me to repent. Many of us feel very much on the defensive and want to justify our relationships by mimicking monogamous marriage and making strong statements against such things as promiscuity and seduction of the young. I've been having some correspondence with ex-nun lesbians who want to label the seduction of a nun by a sixteen-year-old student child abuse. Those with a more secular grounding often muddle through, as most other people do, in serial monogamy until over the years at any large party most women, at one time or another, have been lovers with most of the other women and call their community, either affectionately or sourly, "incestuous." There are also those who think coupling is reactionary, the image of bondage that women, and particularly lesbians, should reject, who live alone or in groups, taking their pleasure where they find it. One of the most vocal groups recently celebrates bondage as the most intense sexual fantasy to be fulfilled, the real declaration of freedom from puritanical hypocrisy. With them we come full circle, for they share with those in religious orders the strictest and most specific rules in search of ecstatic experience.

It must be clear to any lesbian who has been around for a while that consensus is impossible. Our sexual preference give us no more in moral common than it does our heterosexual sisters. Our chief reason for wanting to reach consensus is to defend ourselves against judgments from both without and within our community. The ex-nuns trying to make their sister ex-nun confess to child abuse say to her, "Isn't it better to be confronted by loving lesbians than by Christian homophobes?" to which her answer is, of course, "No, it's much, much worse."

Rules made to defend ourselves against those who disapprove of us are suicide weapons, for they serve to distort and then silence what we learn from our own experience, whether we are embracing those rules for ourselves or imposing them on other people. And they are also useless for our defence, for nobody who thinks a lesbian is sick and depraved will be persuaded of our health and virtue even if we set age limits, time limits and correct postures.

As in that boarding school, I wish we could begin without rules, except those to do with physical safety, make rules only when they seem necessary and start afresh every year or so.

When I refer to "our community," it is a metaphor. We don't live under one roof, in one city, or even in one country. We, as lesbians, don't have to get along as we do with people who share a geography, property and all the mundane chores of



citizenship. The only rule I'd like to propose for "our community" is tolerance, because we certainly have been getting into bad squabbles on the public platform and on paper. Oh, we can disagree all we like, but none of us needs to convert the whole world to separatism, monogamy, sadomasochism or celibacy for the freedom to choose for ourselves, and each of us has more to learn about other choices without feeling personally threatened by them.

The problem is much more complex when we confront differences between people attempting to be friends and lovers.

One rule which is gaining support, particularly among younger lesbians, is the eliminating of power in relationships between women in an attempt to get away from the inequality of heterosexual models. Not only must concepts of butch and femme be banished, but women should seek out other women as much like themselves as they can. Look-alike, feel-alike and think-alike couples are becoming so common that they may be the forerunners of the arranged marriages of the past, with the same drawbacks because they infect any community with the snobberies of race, class, education, money, health and good looks. Further, power is not in this way eliminated, for power trips are not sourced in differences but in the simple desire of a person to dominate or be dominated.

It is not power but its abuse which should concern people. If one member of a couple is much stronger than the other, it doesn't necessarily follow that the weaker one will be abused. It may mean instead that nobody has to be hired to move heavy objects around. If one member of a couple is much brighter about figures, it doesn't necessarily follow that one will control the money. She may simply be stuck with doing the income tax

returns. For strength and gifts are there to be of service in any loving circumstance.

The line in the marriage service, "for better or worse, for richer or poorer," which has trapped far too many people in destructive relationships, does have the virtue of reminding us that both circumstances and people change. Even if two people start out in a relatively equal relationship, one may eventually make much more money than the other, be faced with a disabling disease, become famous, have to assume responsibility for an aging relative. Any of those changes would certainly break up a relationship based on a canceling balance of power.

People in love do have enormous power over each other, and it is often unequal simply in the quality of caring. Sylvia Townsend Warner wrote of her lifelong lover, Valentine Ackland, "...yonder sits the other one, who had all the cards in her hand — except one. That I was the better at loving and being loved." It was a relationship that survived sexual infidelity, separation, financial hardship, impossible mothers, war, Valentine's conversion to Catholicism, not without periods of strife and pain but with a great deal of productive work (both women were writers) and happiness. Sylvia Townsend Warner knew how to use rather than abuse her power to love and be loved.

People who want to be sure that they are always free to be and do as they please might be better off living alone, and increasing numbers do, in love with their work or their leisure, setting up a network of friends dependable in emergencies like illness or Christmas.

Only people unafraid of power, willing to risk being vulnerable to it and to take responsibility for it, are real candidates for serious relationship,

continued on page 41

Jane Rule

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